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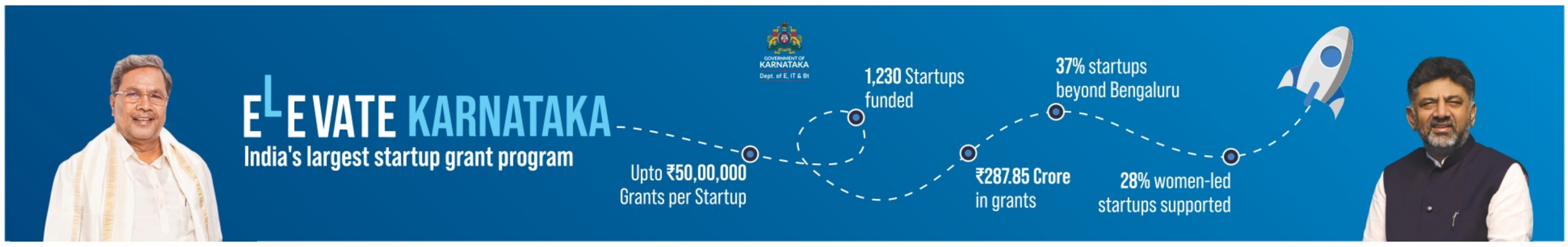
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GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
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Upto ₹50,00,000 Grants per Startup
1,230 Startups funded
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Words come alive

Banu Mushtaq's quiet rebellion, Kiran Desai's language of love, longing, and loneliness, and more as *The Hindu* **Lit for Life 2026** comes to a close

The all-new Kia Seltos
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THE HINDU LIT FOR LIFE 2026
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▸ International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq in conversation with Journalist Pankaja Srinivasan. R. RAGU

▸ Author Kiran Desai in conversation with Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson of The Hindu Group. R. RAGU

FULL COVERAGE » PAGES 13, 14, & 15

PMFBY: State ranks 2nd in implementation

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka has secured the second rank in the large States category in the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), earning a Certificate of Commendation from the Union Agriculture Ministry for its performance during the kharif season 2024 and the rabi season 2024.

Out of the 27.04 lakh registered farmers, 11.85 lakh have claimed ₹2,094 crore under the scheme.

The Ministry noted that Karnataka had made notable progress in delivering insurance coverage and timely compensation to farmers facing crop losses.

The PMFBY is a flagship crop insurance scheme of the Centre that seeks to provide financial security to farmers and encourage resilient agricultural practices.

The certificate was issued by Muktanand Agrawal, CEO of PMFBY.

PM launches ₹6,957-crore Kaziranga corridor work

Modi lays the foundation stone for the 86-km project, flags off two Amrit Bharat trains from poll-bound Assam; he accuses Congress of aiding infiltrators, neglecting Kaziranga National Park

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday cited the outcome of the Bihar Assembly election and the Mumbai civic polls to claim that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has become the first choice of the people in the country.

After laying the foundation stone for the ₹6,957-crore Kaziranga elevated corridor and virtually flagging off two Amrit Bharat trains from poll-bound Assam's Kaliabor, Mr. Modi also said that the Congress had lost the trust of the nation.

The 86-km Kaziranga elevated corridor is a four-lane National Highway project, which includes 35 km of an elevated road passing through the Kaziranga National Park. "The elevated wildlife corridor will ensure uninterrupted movement of animals and reduce human-wildlife conflict. It will also enhance road safety, reduce travel time and accident rates," an official statement said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inspects the model of the proposed Kaziranga elevated corridor in Kaliabor, Assam, on Sunday. ANI

Mr. Modi also praised the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led Assam government for stopping rhinoceros poaching in Kaziranga, the "soul of Assam" and a "priceless jewel of the country" that he accused the Congress of neglecting.

Mr. Modi also accused the Congress of handing over Assam's land to infiltrators and helping them encroach on large swathes of land and lauded the government for tackling infiltration and freeing forests and historical and cultural sites from encroachment.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

'Syndicate tax' hurting Bengal's development: PM

KOLKATA
Accusing the Trinamool Congress government of imposing a 'syndicate tax' on development in West Bengal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said investments would not come to the State as long as the party remained in power. » PAGE 10

NEARBY

Issues at toll plazas trigger traffic jams

BENGALURU
Many commuters using the partially completed Bengaluru–Chennai Expressway have raised concerns over frequent malfunctions at the toll plazas. » PAGE 4

Two convicts booked on assault charge

BENGALURU
The Parappana Agrahara Police have registered a case against two convicts for allegedly assaulting an assistant jailer at the central prison. » PAGE 2

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 19

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Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

A BG-BGE

Collective success is King's catalyst

The leg-spinner is quick to shift focus on team work when individual performances are discussed; she feels being a late entrant to the national side has been a blessing in disguise, is looking forward to her stint at the WPL, passing her knowledge to youngsters

Kavita Menon

There are figures attached to Alana King's career that others might frame and celebrate – a seven-wicket haul in a World Cup match and a unique Test five-for at the Melbourne Cricket Ground that helped seal an Ashes whitewash. But she carries them lightly.

Ask her about standout days or mind-boggling spells, and she immediately shifts the focus towards the group, the work, and the shared result. It is a perspective that shapes not only the way she plays, but also how she processes success, guiding how she approaches each match and measures the value of every contribution.

It's striking to consider how different things might have been for Australia and herself had she not answered that defining phone call, a reward of her quiet hard work. It catapulted King to the biggest stage, with the national team landing its newest leg-spin talent.

The call that changed everything

The bold move from Victoria to Western Australia the season prior, coupled with a strong Women's Big Bash League (WBBL) campaign, had paid off and placed King firmly on the radar. And that career-altering moment came ahead of the 2022 Women's Ashes series.

"That phone call will live rent-free in my head. I think as soon as I got into camp, the whole group made me feel really welcomed. I felt like I belonged. Things changed a lot from that moment," she recalled in a conversation with *The Hindu*.

King, coming in as a replacement for injured Georgia Wareham, had no expectations of playing and was content simply to be around the squad, absorbing as much as she could. But little did she know that her maiden cap was far closer than anticipated.

"To play the first T20 and then go on to make all three debuts in that series was pretty remarkable. I don't think it really hit until that first game of the Ashes, that first T20 at Adelaide Oval, when I was singing the anthems with my teammates. I was like wow this is a really cool moment I'm getting to live."

Debuting at 26, slightly later than many of her peers, King realised a childhood dream with her ever-supporting family watching from the stands. "I came into the Australian squad at a later age, but I think I was a lot more mature as a cricketer and as a person. I wouldn't have it any other way," she recalled.

To the fast lane

Australia backed its new entrant across the Ashes, and King repaid the faith with wickets in all but one game, playing her part in a dominant home series win and, in turn, earning a maiden World Cup call-up.

The 2022 Women's ODI World Cup in New Zealand remains a special chapter. King finished as the team's second-highest wicket-taker with 12 scalps in nine matches, including a pivotal three-wicket haul in the final against defending champion England.

Just two months into her international career, King had ascended to the highest throne – a World Cup winner with Australia. From there, the trajectory only continued upward, fuelled by a simple mantra: "Do anything to help this team win". She had steadily evolved into a lethal weapon for the Green & Gold juggernaut, her versatility and willingness to embrace any role emerging as decisive assets. Whether it was constricting the run flow, unsettling batters, or shifting seamlessly into her preferred wicket-taking mode, she delivered every time.

An Ashes of a lifetime

If King had not already become a familiar name in the women's game, she certainly did during the historic 2025 Women's Ashes – a series that would soon be remembered as Alana King's Ashes.

She began with 11 wickets across the ODIs, highlighted by a sublime five-for that handed the home side a commanding lead. Three more scalps followed in the T20Is, setting the stage for the series-defining Test at the MCG.

King struck early, grinding through a marathon 23-over spell to take four wickets in the first innings. She matched it in the second, but wanted one more – not for the milestone, but to get Australia over the line.

England's final pair resisted stubbornly, yet it was fitting that King delivered the decisive blow, sealing an innings victory and her maiden Test five-for. The effort etched her name onto the MCG honours board, making her only the second woman after Peggy Antonio to do so.

She finished with 23 wickets, equalling Ashleigh Gardner's Ashes record, but it was the 16-0 clean sweep that mattered most. "It was an incredible series as a collective. To play a big part in that, I'm very proud of. We celebrated the victory because they don't come around all that often in the Ashes," she said.

If King had not already become a familiar name in the women's game, she certainly did during the historic 2025 Women's Ashes – a series that would soon be remembered as Alana King's Ashes

When winning isn't guaranteed

For all the dominance Australia has enjoyed, the past two years have also delivered sobering reminders of how unforgiving elite cricket can be. The invincibility that once defined the side was punctured in consecutive World Cup semifinals – first at the 2024 Women's T20 World Cup, and then again at the 2025 Women's ODI World Cup.

"We were quite disappointed that we stumbled in the semifinal. Unfortunately, the last couple of years, we've lost two crucial games in the World Cup," she admitted.

The title holder was stunned by India, the eventual champion, only two months ago. "It hurts, no doubt. It's always good in hindsight because you can always say, we should have done this or we could have done that. But at the end of the day, credit to India.

"They outplayed us. It was a really important game. For them to go on to win the World Cup, no doubt they would have done the whole of India proud. It's going to do a world of good for the women's game all around," she said.

That solitary loss, as brutal as it was, did little to overshadow the broader picture of Australia's campaign. Six wins from seven matches, and a washout, meant it once again completed a flawless group stage.

The run was aptly capped by another crowning moment for King – a rare seven-wicket haul, the first such feat in World Cup history. "It was one of those days, and it all happened really quickly. I didn't obviously take it in then," said King, who uprooted South Africa in quick time.

"I got spoken about a fair bit, which I get a little bit embarrassed about. It was great that my mum and dad were there to witness it. It doesn't come around that often. I'll remember it for the rest of my career and even post my career."

There was pride in the performance, but she accepted it would have felt more rewarding if the team had finished on a high note. "I don't really look at personal accolades too much. I would have loved to have that included in a World Cup win, but it was not meant to be."

Sharpening the edge

The highs of personal achievement are never an endpoint, but a foundation for the next challenge for King. Her leg-spin, always her go-to weapon, is honed relentlessly, with hours spent refining variations and upping her skill.

"When you're under pressure, you're going to go to the ball that you're going to feel most comfortable with," she explained. "I spend a lot of time working on that. No doubt, you have to work on a few variations to make sure you're keeping ahead of the game and the batters."

She approaches each game with focus, curiosity, and a drive to improve. "Whether it's variations or just tactical things, I think I learn a lot from my own peers, my teammates and the coaches and mentors that I've got around me.

"I keep having honest conversations with people I know who are going to give me the truth and not sugarcoat anything on where I need to get better at. I'm definitely looking forward to the challenge this year," King said.

The upcoming India series on home soil offers a fresh test. She is well aware of the threat posed by a rejuvenated and inspired line-up. "India is going to be a massive threat in all formats of the game. It's going to be a very exciting series," she said.

Challenges ahead

But before the multi-format schedule and an all-important T20 World Cup, there's the Women's Premier League, where King is donning the Delhi Capitals jersey, in as a replacement for fellow Aussie Anabel Sutherland.

Initially going unsold in this year's mega auction and getting scant game time with her previous franchise, UP Warriorz, King is ready for what's to come. "It feels like I've blinked and I'm back in India," she quipped. "No doubt, I would have loved to have a bit more game time last year, but that's the way cricket goes, especially franchise cricket.

"But I think it's just an exciting time to be here. I get to pass on some knowledge to the younger generation, the domestic players over here, and learn from them as well. I'm playing with some new international players I haven't played with before. I've never worked with Jonathan Batty before, so I'm excited for that.

"If I'm in the best 11, I'm in the best 11. I'll go and play my role. I'm here to enjoy it, contribute to the team and learn as much as I can."

For King, it's a constant quest to better herself, with the bigger picture always in mind. Her humility and commitment to collective success keep her a step ahead, both in the game and beyond. And she will continue to move forward the same way she always has – focused on the work, anchored in the team and content to let her mastery speak for her.

THE GIST

- For King, the highs of personal achievement are never an endpoint, but a foundation for the next challenge. Her leg-spin, always her go-to weapon, is honed relentlessly, with hours spent refining variations and upping her skill
- The upcoming India series on home soil offers a fresh test. She is well aware of the threat posed by a rejuvenated and inspired line-up
- Initially going unsold in this year's mega auction and getting scant game time with her previous franchise, UP Warriorz, King is ready for what's to come

> I think it's just an exciting time to be here. I get to pass on some knowledge to the younger generation, the domestic players over here, and learn from them as well

Two convicts booked for assaulting assistant jailer at central prison

Police registered an FIR after the Prison Department conducted an internal inquiry and subsequently lodged a formal complaint

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The incident has once again brought into focus the irregularities within the prison system and the pressure faced by the prison staff. FILE PHOTO

The Parappana Agrahara Police have registered a case against two convicts for allegedly assaulting an assistant jailer during a routine inspection at the central prison following a trivial argument on January 7.

The accused have been identified as Ananda and Abdul Ghani. Police registered an FIR after the Prison Department conducted an internal inquiry and subsequently lodged a formal complaint. The two have been booked under relevant sections for assaulting a government servant while discharging official duties.

According to the complaint, S. Murthy, assistant jailer, was on duty when a group of inmates demanded permission to meet the Superintendent of Prison. When the request was denied, a heated argument broke out, which allegedly escalated into physical assault. Investigators said Ananda and Abdul Ghani attacked the assistant jailer, prompting other prison staff to intervene and bring the situation under control.

In his report to senior authorities, Mr. Murthy flagged serious concerns over the lack of adequate security for prison staff, stating that officials were vulnerable to attacks by inmates during routine duties. He urged the authorities to take immediate security measures to prevent similar incidents from spiralling out of control.

The incident has once again brought into focus the irregularities within the prison system and the pressure faced by prison staff. Notably, a high-level committee on prison reforms, which recently submitted its report to the Home Minister, had highlighted the urgent need to strengthen security for prison personnel.

Meanwhile, prison officials have intensified surprise inspections inside the jail. On January 15, staff recovered three mobile phones from a dustbin near the washroom of Room No. 5, Tower 1, Barrack 4. Officials said that since late November, authorities have seized over 135 mobile phones, more than 100 SIM cards, and other prohibited items from within the prison premises.

Man cheats software engineer of ₹1.75 crore

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A man cheated a young software engineer of nearly ₹1.75 crore on the pretext of marriage. The police booked three members of the same family, charging them with cheating and criminal intimidation.

The accused has been identified as Vijay Raj Gowda, his father Bore Gowda, and a woman named Soumya. The victim, a 29-year-old software engineer from Whitefield, approached the police after discovering that the man who promised to marry her was already married and had a child.

According to the complaint, the victim came into contact with Vijay Raj Gowda through a matrimonial website in March 2024. He allegedly showcased himself as a wealthy businessman.

Gowda allegedly gained the victim's trust by introducing her to his family and assuring her that he would marry her. During one such meeting near Kengeri, he introduced his wife as his 'sister', concealing his marital status.

Later, he claimed that his bank accounts had been frozen due to an Enforcement Directorate-related issue and showed her alleged court documents, including copies purportedly related to cases in the High Court and Supreme Court. Citing financial difficulties, he initially borrowed ₹15,000, followed by larger amounts.

Police said the accused persuaded the victim to take loans in her name and also induced her to borrow money from friends and relatives, promising joint business ventures. He further encouraged the victim's friends to invest, assuring them of high returns.

Over several months, the accused allegedly collected money in instalments from the victim, her friends, and relatives, amounting to ₹1.75 crore. Though he returned ₹22 lakh at one point, he later refused to repay the remaining amount.

When the victim and her friends demanded their money back, the accused allegedly issued threats. The fraud came to light when the victim discovered that Gowda was already married and had a child, post which the victim registered a complaint.

A case was initially registered at the Whitefield Police Station and later transferred to the Kengeri Police Station for further investigation.

Tech helps police reunite missing children with kin in record time

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

With the help of technology-enabled and community-centric policing, the Bengaluru Police have successfully traced and reunited as many as six missing and unattended children with their families within minutes over the last 12 days, under the Bengaluru Safe City Project, supported by the Namma-112 emergency response system and the automated Hoysala patrol dispatch network.

Digital tools

According to the police, over the past few weeks, multiple incidents involving vulnerable children were resolved swiftly through real-time emergency response, GPS-based patrol deployment, and seamless coordination between the police control room and field personnel. Response times in these cases ranged from an impressive 4 to 20 minutes.

The first incident occurred on December 27, 2025, under the jurisdiction of J.P. Nagar Police Station, when a mentally unstable woman attempted to take away a two-year-old child. The suspicious behaviour was noticed by ASI Mallikarjun B.G. of Tilak Nagar Police Station, who alerted Namma-112. An automatic Case File System (CFS) event was generated, and Hoysala-145 reached the spot within five minutes, ensuring the child was safely reunited with the mother.

Later the same night, under the Chamarajapete Police Station limits, a woman reported her 16-year-old mentally challenged son missing. The control room dispatched Hoysala-91, which arrived within nine minutes and traced the boy after a brief search, reuniting him with his family. On December 29, a child found wandering alone in Bellandur prompted another Namma-112 call. Hoysala-239 reached the location within 13 minutes, secured the child, traced the parents, and ensured a safe handover.

Similar swift action was seen on January 3, 2026, near Sanjeevini Nagar, Hegganahalli, where Hoysala-108 responded within 11 minutes to rescue a four-year-old child found crying by the roadside. The child was later reunited with the parents.

On January 4, under the Kadugodi Police Station limits, two children found roaming on the road were rescued by Hoysala-232, which reached the spot in 17 minutes and safely escorted the children home after verification. Another successful operation was carried out on January 8, when Hoysala-292 traced a seven-year-old boy, Tejas, reported missing from Dananayakanahalli under Kumbalagodu Police Station limits, reuniting him with his family within 20 minutes.

Record time

The fastest response was recorded on January 14, near the Hosakerehalli Flyover under Girinagar Police Station limits, where Hoysala-314 reached the scene in just four minutes after a toddler was spotted wandering on a busy road. The child was promptly secured and handed over to the parents after verification.

Officials said the GPS-enabled proximity mapping system under Namma-112 ensures the nearest Hoysala patrol is automatically deployed.

Cancer awareness event tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Indian Cancer Society (ICS) Bangalore, in association with the Rotary Club of Bangalore (RCB), will organise a public health forum titled 'Shield. Screen. Support.: Cervical Cancer Awareness and Prevention 2026' on Tuesday.

The event is scheduled from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Rotary House of Friendship on Lavelle Road. It aims to highlight the growing incidence of cervical cancer and the importance of early detection and prevention. Students from leading institutions will take part in expert-led quizzes.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to the public that we are investigating the right, title, interest, benefits, entitlements of whatsoever nature of the respective owners of the properties situated at Doddakarenahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Nelamangala Taluk, Bangalore Rural Dist., which is more particularly described in the schedule hereunder written and herein after collectively called SCHEDULE PROPERTY". Our client("Client") is desirous of entering into the sale transaction of the schedule property with respective owners of the schedule property who have represented to our client that they are the absolute owners of their respective extents in the schedule property with rights of alienation over the same.

All persons including an individual, a Hindu undivided family, a company, banks, financial institutions, non- banking financial institutions, a firm, an association of persons or a body of individuals whether incorporated or not, lenders and or creditors having objection, claim, right, title and/or interest in respect of schedule property or any part or portion thereof by way of sale, memorandum of understanding, exchange, mortgage, pledge, charge, gift, trust, inheritance, bequest, succession, family arrangement, grant, possession, lease, sub-lease, tenancy, sub-tenancy, maintance,easement,license,bequeath,share,assignment,lien,attachment,development rights, covenant, settlement right of way, Lis pendens, reservation, agreement, FSI consumption, development rights, order/decree/judgment of the court or any liability or commitment or otherwise or demand of any nature whatsoever are hereby requested to inform the same in writing, supported with the original documents, to the undersigned having their office at #468, INCHARA,1st Floor, 4th Main Road, Nagendra Block, Near Life Care Medicals-47, Bangalore-560050 with in a period of 7(seven) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which the claim or claims, if any of such person or persons shall be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client would be at liberty to proceed with the sale transaction in connection with the schedule property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Item No.	Survey No.	Extent		BOUNDARIES			
		Acre	Guntas	EAST BY	WEST BY	NORTH BY	SOUTH BY
1.	90	1	25	Sy.No.91	Sy.No.89,88,& 87	Sy.No.33	Road
2.	91/2	1	25	Sy.No.92/2	Sy.No.90	Sy.No.33/p1 & others	Road
3.	92/2	2	4	Sy.No.34	Sy.No.91/2	Sy.No.111	Road
4.	93	2	08	Sy.No.33	Sy.No.29	Sy.No.94	Sy.No.87,88,& 89
5.	95	3	38	Sy.No.94	Sy.No.33	Sy.No.108	Sy.No.111
6.	98	2		Sy.No.94	Sy.No.99	Sy.No.97	Sy.No.29
7.	111	2		Sy.No.34	Sy.No.33	Sy.No.95	Sy.No.91 &92

AJITH KASHYAP TN Advocate,
#468, INCHARA,1st Floor, 4th Main Road, Nagendra Block, Near Life Care Medical-47, Bangalore-560050.
Ph. : 9481305461 E-mail id : ajithkashyap93@gmail.com

Dated : 19/01/2026

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (Only through KPP portal)

BWSSB invites Expression of Interest from Self Help Groups (SHGs)for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (East), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bangalore-09.

S.No.	Name of the Works	Address for Communication & EoI
1	Implementation of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT - 2.0) in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board.	Office of the Executive Engineer, BWSSB, East-1 Division, 10th Main, 1st Cross, Indiranagar, Bengaluru-560038. Email: eee@bwssb.gov.in
2	Implementation of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT - 2.0) in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board.	Office of the Executive Engineer, BWSSB, East-2 Division, HRBR 1st Block, Kalyan Nagar, Bengaluru - 560043.
3	Implementation of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT - 2.0) in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board.	Office of the Executive Engineer, BWSSB, South-East-1 Division, 10th Main, 1st Cross, Indiranagara, 2nd Stage, Bengaluru - 560038.
4	Implementation of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT - 2.0) in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board.	Office of the Executive Engineer, BWSSB, South-East-2 Division, 2nd Floor, 11th Main, 35th cross, 4th T Block, Bengaluru-560041.

Last date for receiving of queries in portal / Pre-EoI Meeting: **23.01.2026 at 4.00 pm.** The Last date for submission of response to EoI **: 27.01.2026 at 4.00 pm.** Date & time of opening of EoI : **28.01.2026 at 4.00 pm.** EoI validity period : **182 days from the EoI due date.**

Sd/- Chief Engineer (East)

Office of the Chief Engineer (West), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bangalore-09.

1	Implementation of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT - 2.0) in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board.	Office of the Executive Engineer, BWSSB, North-West-1 Division, 2nd Stage, West of chord road, Behind Modi hospital, Bengaluru-560086.

Last date for receiving of queries in portal : **26.01.2026 at 4.00 pm.** Pre-bid Meeting : **27.01.2026 at 11.00 am.** The Last date for submission of response to EoI **: 29.01.2026 at 4.00 pm.** Date & time of opening of EoI : **30.01.2026 at 4.00 pm.** EoI validity period : **365 days from the EoI due date i.e, 30.01.2027.**

2	Implementation of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT - 2.0) in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board.	Office of the Executive Engineer, BWSSB, North-West-2 Division, 1st Floor, Survarna Bhavan, Margosa Road, 18th cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru-560055.
3	Implementation of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT - 2.0) in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board.	Office of the Executive Engineer, BWSSB, West-1 Division, 9th cross, 5th Main, 2nd Stage, RPC Layout, Vijaynagar, Bengaluru-560040.

Last date for receiving of queries in portal : **30.01.2026 at 4.00 pm.** Pre-bid Meeting : **02.02.2026 at 11.00 am.** The Last date for submission of response to EoI **: 05.02.2026 at 4.00 pm.** Date & time of opening of EoI : **06.02.2026 at 4.00 pm.** EoI validity period : **365 days from the EoI due date i.e, 06.02.2027.**

4	Implementation of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT - 2.0) in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board.	Office of the Executive Engineer, BWSSB, West-2 Division, CA Site No. 04, 1st Block, SMV Layout, Bengaluru-560056.

Last date for receiving of queries in portal : **27.01.2026 at 4.00 pm.** Pre-bid Meeting : **29.01.2026 at 11.00 am.** The Last date for submission of response to EoI **: 03.02.2026 at 4.00 pm.** Date & time of opening of EoI : **04.02.2026 at 4.00 pm.** EoI validity period : **365 days from the EoI due date i.e, 04.02.2027.**

Sd/- Chief Engineer (West)

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-Procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the above mentioned offices during working hours.

DIPR/CP/YC/5084/2025-26

Directorate of Tourism (DoT), Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai
Head Off.: Sakhar Bhavan, 4th Floor, Plot No. 230, Ramnath Goenka Marg, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400 021 **Telephone:** 91-22-69107600
E-mail: diot@maharashtratourism.gov.in **Website:** www.maharashtratourism.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE

Directorate of Tourism is inviting proposals for the following project via its e-tendering system from pre-qualified organizations. Details of the project are as follows details are as below:

Project: Selection of Project Management Consultant for the World Bank supported 'MahaSTRIDE' Operation for Directorate of Tourism, Govt of Maharashtra.

E – Tender Schedule

Period for downloading and submitting tenders online – **19/01/2026 (05:00 PM) to 20.02.2026 (05:00 PM)**

Date and time of opening of Technical proposal – **23.02.2026 (05:00 PM)**

Corrigendum - **The above e-tender notices and corrections will be displayed online only.**

Detailed tender instructions and e-tender information are available from the following website. **www.mahatenders.gov.in**

Sd/- **Director DoT, Mumbai**

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED

(CIN : U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No: CEE/Tr(O)Z/HSN/SEE(O)/AEE-2/F-A54&A56/2025-26/12622-25 Date: 17.01.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

(THROUGH KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL ONLY)

KPTCL invites bids for the following works.

Tender No. KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_INDENT3100/CALL-2 for Combined package of following works on **PTK basis.**

1.) "Providing additional 1X10MVA, 110/11kV Power Transformer at 110/11kV **McGann Hospital** Sub-Station in Shivamogga Taluk & District Work Code-CD1120".

2.) "Providing additional 1X10MVA, 110/11kV Power Transformer at 110/11kV **Gajanur** Sub-Station in Shivamogga Taluk & District Work Code-CD1121"

Note: 10 MVA PTR and 11kV switchgear will be supplied by KPTCL for above works.

The detailed notification regarding subject enquiry in the e-Tendering process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** on hyper link 'E Procurement KPTCL' or **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 19.01.2026.** Other details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Elec.), Transmission (Operations) Zone, KPTCL, 3rd Floor, Prasarana Bhavana, Santhepete, B.M. Road, Hassan- 573201

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General public that my client is intending to purchase the Schedule Property from **Sri. HULIYAR SHANKARANARAYAN GURUPRASAD S/o Sri. Shankar Narayan,** Aged about 41 years, Residing at Flat No. 402, No. 24, Dwaraka West Side Apartment, 3rd Cross, Vidhana Soudha Layout, Laggere, Bangalore 560058 who is the owner of the property absolute owner in physical possession and enjoyment of the residential Site No.1174, 3rd Block, Sir M. Vishveswaraiah Layout, Bangalore, formed by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), Bangalore, measuring East to West: 6-00 Mtrs, and North to South 9-00 Mtrs., in all measuring 54.00 sq.mtrs, together with 500 sq ft. in stilt Floor for parking and 500 sq.ft. in Ground Floor, 500 sq.ft. in First Floor and 300 sq.ft. in Second Floor total 1800 Sq Ft., RCC roofed residential Duplex house with Granite flooring, Teak wood doors and windows, with all civic amenities thereon, which is more fully and particularly described in the schedule hereunder as "Schedule Property". Apart from the said owner if any person/s has/have any kind of right, title, interest and claim or whatsoever in respect of the schedule property, they are hereby called upon to file the objections along with documentary proof within **7 days** from the date of this publication to the below referred address. If no objections are received within the stipulated time, it will be presumed that the above referred is the absolute owner of the schedule property and there are no other claimants.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Intermediate Residential Site bearing **No.1174,** (one thousand one hundred and seventy-four) PID No.6000024399, formed by the Bangalore Development Authority, in **3rd BLOCK, Sir M Vishveswaraiah layout, Bangalore,** and bounded on the

EAST BY : SITE NO.1173/2
WEST BY : SITE NO.1175
NORTH BY : SITE NO.1170 & 1171,
SOUTH BY : ROAD.

Measuring East to West: 6.00 (SIX) Meters and North to South: 9.00 (NINE) Meters., in all measuring 54.00 Sq. mtrs. together with 500 sq ft. in stilt Floor for parking and 500 sq.ft. in Ground Floor, 500 sq.ft. in First Floor and 300 sq.ft. in Second Floor total **1800 Sq Ft.,** RCC roofed residential Duplex house with Granite flooring, Teak wood doors and windows, with all civic amenities thereon.

RAM M K,
ADVOCATE,
113-F, 5-D, 5th Floor, Central Chambers
2nd main, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru-560009.
Contact No. 9986696046.

BENGALURU WEST CITY CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Engineer, Traffic Engineering Cell 2, BWCC, IPP Center, 72/4, 16th Cross, Vyalikaval, Malleshwarm, Bengaluru 560003

No.: EE/BWCC/TEC-2/TEND/03/2025-26 Date: 17.01.2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER

(Only Through KPP Portal) Two Cover System

The Executive Engineer, Traffic Engineering Cell 2, BWCC, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible contractors firm registered in Bengaluru West City Corporation or equivalent registration with Labour Department or any State Government Organizations for the **Collection of Parking Fees for Various roads in Bengaluru West City Corporation, Traffic Engineering Cell 2** as detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of Work
1	Collection of Parking Fees for 18th Cross Road, 15th Cross Road, 2nd Main Road, 11th Cross Road and Sampige Road in Malleshwaram. **Minimum Reserve Annual License Fee (Rs.): 2,20,00,000.00. EMD (in Rs.): 4,00,000/-.**

Time Schedule: (1) Tender document may be downloaded from the KPP Poratl of the Government of Karnataka from **21.01.2026. (2)** Pre-bid meeting will be held on **06.02.2026** at **3:00 p.m.** in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Traffic Engineering Cell 2, BWCC, IPP Center, 72/4, 16th Cross, Vyalikaval, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru-560003. **(3)** Tenders must be submitted online through KPP Portal on or before **4:00 p.m.** on **16.02.2026** and the opening of tenders will be as per e-procurement portal guidelines. **(4)** Technical bids will be opened on the website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Traffic Engineering Cell 2, BWCC, Bengaluru on **18.02.2026** at **4:30 p.m.** Further details can be obtained from the above office during working hours or from the website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Traffic Engineering Cell 2, BWCC

idco ODISHA Your power to grow ISO 9001 & 14001 Corporation NEW OPPORTUNITIES

File No. HO/Civil/T&E-E- 5298/01/2025 993 Dt. 09.01.2026
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (CIVIL)-IIIDCO, IDCO TOWER, BHUBANESWAR.
Bid Identification No. Civil/EST/ 25/2025-26
NOTICE INVITING TENDER UNDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

1. **Name of the Work:-** Construction of Swimming Pool in the district of Koraput, Odisha
2. **Value of the Work :-** Rs. 1742.72 Lakhs (Approx.)
3. **Period of completion:-** 12(Twelve) Calendar Months
4. **Availability of tender online for Bidding:**
   - **I.** Start Date: 18:00 Hours of dt. 20.01.2026
   - **II.** Prebid meeting Date: 11.30 Hours of dtd. 27.01.2026
   - **III.** End date: 17:00 Hours of dt. 09.02.2026
   - **IV.** Opening date: 17.30 Hours of dt. 09.02.2026

Tender details can be seen from the e-procurement portal. **www.tendersorissa.gov.in.** Corrigendum or Addendum if any will not be published in newspapers and can be seen in **e-procurement portal** as well as in **IDCO website.**

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Civil)-II
IDCO, Bhubaneswar

CAD-3045

ମୁଖ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ
ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ମଣ୍ଡଳ, ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁର
(ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ / ପୋଷ୍ଟ- ଆମ୍ବପୁଆ, ଆୟକର ଭବନ ନିକଟରେ, , ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁର - ୭୬୦୦୧୧, ଗଞ୍ଜାମ, ଓଡିଶା

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR
(At/Po :- Ambapua, Near Income Tax Office, Berhampur-760011. Ganjam, Odisha)
(E-Mail:- serwbpr2004@yahoo.com; Tel No.:-0680-2404287)

No. e-tender / 285 // RWC// BAM// Dated.17.01.26 E-Mail / E-despatch

2nd Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. Online Tender / 45-2025-26/BPR

1) **The partial modification of Road works under IMPROVEMENT TO EXISTING RD ROADS for the year 2025-26 vide above identification has been made as follows.**

1.	Date of Availability of tender	:	**16.02.2026 to 02.03.2026 upto 5.30 PM** instead of 17.01.2026 to 31.01.2026 upto 5.30 PM.
2.	Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	:	**27.02.2026 at 5.30 PM** instead of 29.01.2026 at 5.30 PM.
3.	Date of opening of Technical Bid	:	**05.03.2026 at 11.00 AM** instead of 02.02.2026 at 11.00 AM
4.	Date of opening of Financial Bid	:	**Will be intimated later on**

All other contents will remain unchanged.

O-2083

Chief Engineer, R.W.Circle, Berhampur

idco ODISHA Your power to grow ISO 9001 & 14001 Corporation NEW OPPORTUNITIES

File No. HO/Civil/T&E-E- 5263/01/2025 1009 Dt.09.01.2026
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (CIVIL) - IIIDCO, IDCO TOWER, BHUBANESWAR.
Bid Identification No. Civil/EST/ 26/2025-26
NOTICE INVITING TENDER UNDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

1. **Name of the Work:-** Construction of Swimming Pool in the district of Rayagada, Odisha
2. **Value of the Work :-** Rs. 2040.00 Lakhs (Approx.)
3. **Period of completion:-** 12(Twelve) Calendar Months
4. **Availability of tender online for Bidding:**
   - **I.** Start Date: 18:00 Hours of dt.20.01.2026
   - **II.** Prebid meeting Date: 11.30 Hours of dtd. 27.01.2026
   - **III.** End date: 17:00 Hours of dt. 10.02.2026
   - **IV.** Opening date: 17.30 Hours of dt. 10.02.2026

Tender details can be seen from the e-procurement portal. **www.tendersorissa.gov.in.** Corrigendum or Addendum if any will not be published in newspapers and can be seen in **e-procurement portal** as well as in **IDCO website.**

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Civil)-II
IDCO, Bhubaneswar

CAD-3044

Why participatory science is crucial to tackling coconut root wilt disease

Phytoplasma-induced root wilt disease has destroyed large tracts of coconut-growing areas in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala which together account for around 82-83% of India's coconut production; coconut palms that display tolerance under high inoculum pressure and intense vector load hold the key to combating phytoplasma

R. Ranjit Kumar

Coconut is one of the largest horticultural crops in peninsular India, and an increasing number of farmers are taking up coconut plantations due to a lack of labour availability and the intensive attention required to raise annual crops.

The three States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala together account for about 82-83 % of India's coconut production. Coconut is not only culturally interwoven but also defines the landscape of regions like Alappuzha and Pollachi, known for their pristine beauty.

Now, this carefully cultivated imagery is under threat from a microscopic adversary: phytoplasma. Specifically, phytoplasma-induced root wilt disease has destroyed large tracts of traditional coconut-growing areas in these three States.

Rapid expansion

Root wilt disease is a debilitating condition. It is classified as a non-fatal disease and was first identified more than a century and a half ago in Erattupetta in Kerala. More than 150 years of sustained scientific research at the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), Kayamkulam, has yet to yield a definitive cure.

The disease spreads through insect vectors, aided by the movement of wind and uninterrupted stretches of coconut plantations. While the disease has existed for decades, its spread used to be limited. Today, its rapid expansion has caught many farmers unprepared.

In fact both farmers and the scientific community concur that erratic temperatures, especially extremes, and the rise of new sucking pests, particularly whiteflies, have significantly accelerated its spread. The combined effect of abiotic stress induced by climate change and biotic stress from emerging pests has rendered coconut palms increasingly susceptible to root wilt disease. Once a few palms are infected in a region, sufficient inoculum builds up to hasten further spread. Recent assessments indicate that more than 30 lakh coconut palms have already been affected across major coconut-growing regions.

In areas such as Pollachi, where farmers have prospered by adopting intercropping systems in coconut plantations with shade-loving permanent crops like cocoa and nutmeg, the situation has turned into a double disaster. Without the shade of the coconut canopy, cocoa and nutmeg trees simply succumb to thermal stress.

A successful tool

Research institutions have attempted to address this plight through two broad approaches: first by developing standardised integrated cultivation practices using a judicious mix of organic and inorganic inputs, and second by developing resistant and tolerant varieties. Farmers who have religiously followed the recommended practices contend that these measures have done little to prevent the spread of the disease. Once a tree is infested, symptoms appear only after a prolonged incubation period, and often vary, since they are superimposed with those of other diseases such as leaf decay.

The tree quickly becomes unproductive, sheds all its nuts, and assumes a distorted appearance. Even if the disease is not immediately fatal, the palm continues to act as a source of pathogen inoculum. The phytoplasma challenge is not confined to coconut alone. The spread of yellow leaf disease in arecanut across parts of Karnataka serves as a parallel reminder of how vector-borne palm diseases can silently expand when early, field-based interventions are inadequate.

CPCRI Kayamkulam has released one resistant and three tolerant varieties. Institutions such as the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and the Coconut Development Board (CDB) multiply these varieties, but production has been limited to only a few thousand seedlings a year.

Breeding resistant and tolerant varieties remains one of the most successful tools for managing phytoplasma, as demonstrated by the high degree of success in addressing phytoplasma-related diseases in palms across the globe, from the Caribbean to Africa. Steps can be taken to import such varieties under strict quarantine protocols for field evaluation.

However, a more prudent and sustainable approach would be to tap into the reservoir of genetic wealth already standing in farmers' fields within highly infested endemic zones. Coconut palms that display tolerance under high inoculum pressure and intense vector load hold the key to combating phytoplasma.

The government and the scientific community must ensure that participatory selection and participatory breeding are pursued in all earnestness to confront the menace threatening coconut cultivation

A participatory approach to selection offers a credible pathway to addressing the central constraint in combating phytoplasma: identifying and breeding resistant and tolerant varieties. In highly infested regions, systematic participatory selection of coconut palms, combined with structured observation, can be undertaken with farmers playing a central role.

With appropriate training, farmers can be enabled to identify potentially tolerant palms and can be instructed on the importance of careful, long-term observation and record-keeping. This would significantly reduce the burden on scientific institutions while generating richer, field-relevant datasets.

Once tolerant or resistant palms are identified and validated, they can be inducted into decentralised breeding programmes, allowing multiple small, independent selection and evaluation efforts to proceed simultaneously under scientific supervision. Such an approach also enables the isolation of locally adapted varieties suited to specific agro-climatic conditions.

Institutional action

Given the rapid expansion of root wilt disease into new frontiers, mirroring the trajectory of whitefly, which was once confined to a few pockets in western Tamil Nadu but is now a pan-India pest, time is of the essence. Farmers whose palms are selected for breeding can also benefit through royalty mechanisms envisioned under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act while being encouraged to establish nurseries to multiply planting material at scale to replace the vast number of palms being felled.

The government and the scientific community must, therefore, place renewed faith in citizen science and ensure that participatory selection and participatory breeding are pursued in all earnestness to confront the phytoplasma menace threatening coconut cultivation.

Addressing root wilt at this scale requires coordinated institutional action. Central agencies such as CPCRI and the CDB must work closely with the agricultural universities of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. Fragmented research efforts and parallel trials no longer suffice in the face of a fast-spreading phytoplasma threat. A shared framework for data, evaluation, and field validation is essential to translate participatory science into impact.

(R. Ranjit Kumar is managing director, Pollachi Nutmeg Farmer Producer Company, and ICAR-IARI Innovative Farmer Awardee. ranjitkct@gmail.com)

Silent battle: Coconut trees at the Vanavarayar Institute of Agriculture at Manakkadavu in Pollachi of Tamil Nadu. K. ANANTHAN

THE GIST

- Root wilt disease is a debilitating condition and is classified as a non-fatal disease
- The disease spreads through insect vectors, aided by the movement of wind and uninterrupted stretches of coconut plantations
- The combined effect of abiotic stress induced by climate change and biotic stress from emerging pests has rendered coconut palms increasingly susceptible to root wilt disease
- Breeding resistant and tolerant varieties remains one of the most successful tools for managing phytoplasma

BIG SHOT

Curious case: An epaulette shark in an aquarium in the U.S. Recently, researchers found these sharks' metabolic rates and hormone levels do not change when they lay eggs. They propose the sharks use energy from daily food intake to produce eggs continuously rather than in one go. JIM CAPALDI (CC BY)

WHAT IS IT?

Visibility: light's right of way

Vasudevan Mukunth

In weather science, 'visibility' is a colloquial term for a quantity called the meteorological optical range. It's defined as the distance a beam of light can travel through the atmosphere before its intensity drops to 5% of its original value.

In an older time, a human observer would stand at a point and look for predetermined landmark objects at known distances, e.g. a water tower at 1 km and a temple at 5 km. If the observer can clearly distinguish the object against the skyline, the visibility is at least that distance. At night, they used lights of known intensity.

Modern weather stations use sensors to measure the visibility. In the direction version, a transmitter shoots a laser beam at a receiver located a specific distance away (often 20-75 m). The receiver measures exactly how much light made it across. In the indirect version, a transmitter projects a beam of light past a receiver, not directly at it. If the air is clear, the receiver sees nothing; If there's fog or dust, the particles scatter the light, deflecting some into the receiver. The amount of scattered light is converted into a visibility distance. The India Meteorological Department also classifies visibility depending on smog (i.e. smoke + fog) intensity. This scheme ranges from 500-1,000 m for 'shallow fog' to less than 50 m for 'very dense fog'. On Sunday, the visibility in Delhi had dropped to 'poor', i.e. 50-200 m.

Planes seen parked at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi amid dense fog on Saturday. ANI

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

How the BDA site dream turned sour

As rates soared, the authority was unable to acquire the land at market prices and still make layouts viable and keep the sites affordable

BDA@50

Chetan B.C.
BENGALURU

A file photo of Arkavathi Layout formed by BDA in the northern part of Bengaluru. Following a barrage of litigations questioning land acquisition, the court in 2014 listed a set of six criteria to denotify lands notified for Arkavathi Layout.

Owning a Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) site was once the ultimate dream of every Bengalurean. Its predecessor City Improvement Trust Board (CITB) and the BDA have developed close to 70 layouts in the city, including iconic areas like Jayanagar, Indiranagar, Rajajinagar, R.T. Nagar, Banashankari, Koramangala and J.P. Nagar .

Rajanna (name changed), a retired government employee, said he tried his luck for the first time in 1985 and, after six attempts, finally got a BDA site in Thanisandra in 2000. "The primary reason to aspire for a BDA site was that they were affordable and had good infrastructure," he said. Another reason why it worked was that the land titles were ensured, and one could blindly buy a BDA site, assured its documents were in order.

But towards the end of the 20th century, the BDA site dream began to sour. The mushrooming house building cooperative societies in the 1980s for the first time provided an alternative avenue for affordable sites. They may have not been comparable with regards to infrastructure or clear title deeds of the BDA layouts, but sites were more affordable and without the red tape.

The IT boom was coupled with a real estate boom in Bengaluru, sending land prices northwards, which also contributed to the undoing of the BDA layouts.

All three aspects that made a BDA site such a dream began to be erode. The first to take a hit was affordability, so much so that a popular Kannada song "*Hegide Namma Desha*", from the 1997 film America America had this line: "*BDA siteina rateu iga eshtide? Empire State Buildingiginta Ettarakkogide*".

While in the early 2000s, allottees received 30×40 sites at ₹3 lakh, it rose to ₹24-26 lakh in Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout. In the Shivaram Karanth Layout, prices now stand at around ₹60 lakh, which closely matches those of private developers.

Denotification

Rising land prices made the acquisition of land for developing a layout a herculean task. As land rates soared, BDA was unable to acquire these lands at market prices and still make layouts viable and keep the sites affordable. Given there was high speculation in land prices in Bengaluru, land owners were bound to hit gold if they sold it in the open market than to BDA and have been doing their best to resist acquisition. Once the preliminary notification was issued, there was a rush to get one's land denotified. Multiple Chief Ministers have been accused of corruption in denotifying such lands. The remaining owners resorted to litigation.

Visveswaraiah Layout, Arkavathi Layout, Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout, and Dr. K. Shivaram Karanth Layout, developed by BDA since 2000, have all been hit by the twin phenomenon of denotification and litigation. Following a barrage of litigations questioning land acquisition, the court in 2014 listed a set of six criteria to denotify lands notified for Arkavathi Layout. In a redo scheme, 868 acres were dropped, and this led to allegations of corruption. The Supreme Court intervened, formed a committee, and ensured Shivaram Karanth Layout was indeed formed when lands were being denotified, and there were demands to drop the plan to develop the layout entirely.

Stuck in litigation

Meanwhile, large tracts of land notified for layouts post-2000 are still stuck in litigation, in many cases, even after BDA has developed and allotted sites, making allottees run around for the legal fight for decades now.

H.K. Gowdaiah, a site holder at the Visveswaraiah Layout, pointed to the BDA's negligence . "The BDA allotted sites had legal issues, in some cases even before completing the acquisition process. Nearly half of the 214 sites developed in 56 acres in one block of the Visveswaraiah Layout ran into litigation, and the BDA roped us in as impleaders in the case," he said, adding that they received their sites only after that.

A similar situation unfolded at the Banashankari 6th Stage Layout. After more than a decade of site development and allotment, the Forest Department flagged encroachment by the BDA, and the dispute is still ongoing. A few sectors of HSR Layout, ST Bed Layout, built where once lakes stood, experienced flooding, unheard of before in a BDA layout.

In the 2010s, Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, made land acquisition even tougher. Land owners demanding compensation under the 2013 law and BDA claiming they will compensate under the BDA Act, 1976 is a regular feature now. In response to this logjam, BDA came up with an innovative 60:40 formula where land losers will get only 40% of the compensation package in cash and get developed land for the remaining 60%, which has many takers now.

Suryakiran A.S., a member of the NPKL Open Forum, noted that this worked partially well when implemented in the Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout, as most sites were litigation-free, but the layout lacked infrastructure and suffered from poor-quality work.

Site allottees in NPKL have been running from pillar to post for a decade now, fighting for basic infrastructure. The authority's recent move to appeal to K-RERA to exempt it from the "promoters" tag has led to allegations that it was trying to evade its responsibilities.

(In this series, we look at the evolution of the BDA as it turns 50 years old.)

Details of seats allotted in 2025-26

Type of quota	Available seats	Allotted seats	Remaining seats
Person with Disabilities (PwD)	4,681	464	4,217
Sports	304	92	212
Ex-servicemen	121	35	86

KEA to allot vacant special quota seats under general merit in CET counselling

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) has decided to allot seats under general merit in the first round of Common Entrance Test (CET-2026) counselling if there are no eligible candidates for the seats reserved under the special quota. This includes sports, ex-servicemen and other quotas for admission to engineering and other professional from the upcoming academic year.

The KEA has launched the CET examination process for the academic year 2026-27 and has already allowed the submission of applications online.

Including constitutional based reservations, seats are also allotted under special quotas including Sports, Ex-Servicemen, Person with Disabilities (PwD), National Service Scheme (NSS), National Cadet Corps (NCC), Scouts and Guides.

However, due to the non-availability of eligible candidates, special quota seats remain unallotted in the first and second rounds of CET counselling. Thus, of the total 5,106 seats available under the Sports, Disabled, and Ex-Servicemen quota in 2025-26, only 591 seats were filled and 4,515 seats remained vacant.

Till now, the seats under various quotas that remained unfilled after the first round of seat allotment were considered for the second or third round. The remaining seats were converted into general merit and allotted in the stray vacancy rounds.

However, in this case, a person with a low rank in CET would get a seat in a good college and a candidate with a better rank would miss out.

"Every year, a lot of seats allotted under special quotas remain unfilled. After verifying the documents submitted for the CET exam, exact information is available about the number of people who have applied for which quota seats. Therefore, after the results are declared, it has been decided to convert the remaining seats into general merit and distribute them. This will ensure that meritorious students get seats for their desired courses in the colleges of their choice," said H. Prasanna, Executive Director of KEA.

Unfilled quota seats

As per the new rules, those seeking admission under the sports quota must have participated in two national or international sports events between classes 10 and 12. However, most students do not participate in sports events as they focus on their studies in classes 10 and 12. The number of high school and Pre-University (PU) students in the State who have achieved success in national and international sports is very less.

In 2025-26, of the total 304 seats available under the sports quota, only 92 seats were filled, leaving 212 seats vacant.

Every year during CET counselling, the seats under the PwD quota remain vacant the most. This year, of the total 4,681 seats available under this quota, 464 seats were filled, leaving 4,217 seats vacant. Of the 121 seats available under the ex-servicemen quota, 35 seats were filled, leaving 86 seats vacant.

"For the Scout and Guides, NCC and NSS quotas, candidates have to clear a separate examination conducted by the Union government. But since these examinations are not conducted regularly every year, the seats reserved under these quotas are not being filled," said sources.

Tiger cub captured

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Forest officials captured a 10-month-old tiger cub near Nanjidevanapura at Chamarajanagar taluk in the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve on Saturday night.

"The cub is safe and its health is being closely monitored," said a statement from the Deputy Conservator of Forests and Director of BRT Tiger Reserve. The captured cub was among the four cubs that had been living with their mother near Nanjidevanapura village and Harave hobli in BRT. The mother was captured on January 9 and one cub, about 10 months old, was captured on January 15.

Accused in ₹368-crore crypto fraud was moonlighting for a year, reveal investigations

Chetan B.C.
BENGALURU

The accused in one of Karnataka's costly cybercrime cases, in which a cryptocurrency exchange lost nearly ₹368 crore, had been moonlighting for a year. Though he merely served as bait, he became a crucial entry point for the fraudsters, a probe by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has revealed.

In July 2025, a Bengaluru-based cryptocurrency exchange firm reported that its wallets were hacked into and cryptocurrency worth ₹368 crore was stolen. Police arrested an employee of the firm on suspicion that he was involved in the fraud.

Investigations have now revealed that the accused, Kiran (name changed), a 30-year-old techie who had been working since May 2023 at the cryptocurrency exchange located in Bellandur in East Bengaluru, was hired as a part-timer without a contract by the fraudsters, according to a senior CID investigator.

Photo for representational purpose.

"The fraudsters assigned him a genuine project, made him work diligently, and paid him regularly, just to win his trust before executing the fraud," the officer told *The Hindu*.

How it unfolded

In March 2024, Kiran received a message on a professional networking site from a person named Sarah Ferguson, enquiring whether he was willing to take up a freelance assignment to help set up a website for a crypto exchange, offering an attractive sum. When he agreed, the conversation moved to another platform, where the fraudster explained the project and granted him access to the code repository. Kiran used his full-time work company's laptop to carry out this work as well.

According to the investigation, the fraudsters made Kiran undertake genuine website development work, held regular meetings online to review project updates, and suggested changes by sharing files. The fraudsters paid Kiran ₹15 lakh, leaving him with no reason to suspect he was being exploited for over a year until July 2025.

After one such meeting in July 2025, during which the fraudsters suggested changes, they sent Kiran a slew of files. "For Kiran, this was routine. But this time, the fraudsters had slipped in a bugged file. He opened it without any knowledge of fraud, but it appeared to be a dummy, so he closed it," the officer said. "However, it had already opened in the background, breached the security walls, and compromised the laptop. The fraudsters now had complete access to the device, with Kiran still unaware," he added.

Siphoning

The fraudsters learnt that Kiran had admin access to the company's servers and stole all the private keys. Using these, they accessed the company's systems and exploited the vulnerability.

"Initially, they transferred a small amount, and once that worked, they went on to drain the entire treasury. The cryptocurrencies were first moved to the company's internal wallet and then routed through a conduit of crypto wallets before reaching a single wallet," the officer told *The Hindu*.

While the CID has traced the transaction trail of the stolen cryptocurrencies and identified the wallet where the funds are stored, investigators have been unable to determine its owner. "That is the level of sophistication involved in crypto-related investigations. We can trace transactions, but not the wallet owner," the officer said, adding that efforts are ongoing to take the probe forward. He also noted that the company has since strengthened its security measures.

Pitfalls of moonlighting

According to the officer, there have been similar cases in the city, prompting agencies to improve monitoring mechanisms for such breaches.

In this case, the fraudster could even be a legitimate entrepreneur who spotted an opportunity and exploited it to siphon off the funds. However, it is more likely that the fraud was meticulously planned and executed without any hiccups.

"Moonlighting may seem like the easiest way to make quick money, but it can go terribly wrong when high-profile fraudsters are involved," the officer said. He cautioned tech professionals to be aware of the various modus operandi linked to moonlighting, including part-time job scams, investment, and gaming frauds.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, JAN. 19		
RISE	06:46	SET 18:14
RISE	07:08	SET 18:47
TUESDAY, JAN. 20		
RISE	06:46	SET 18:15
RISE	07:52	SET 19:40
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 21		
RISE	06:46	SET 18:15
RISE	08:32	SET 20:31

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	29	20
Mysuru	29	17
Bengaluru	30	15

Bengaluru Today
28°C The weather will be dry. Day will be comfortable. Night will be cool and hazy. Dry weather to prevail.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
29°C Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be slight warm. Night also will be cool. Dry weather to occur.

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THE HINDU
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Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carry explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (January 19, Monday), the following articles are available:

- How should India tackle child trafficking? **newsth.live/childtraffickingexp**
- Why participatory science is crucial to tackling coconut root wilt disease **newsth.live/rootwilt**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Online fraud: Retired Army Colonel loses ₹1.98 cr.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 71-year-old retired Indian Army Colonel and his wife were allegedly cheated of nearly ₹1.98 crore in a premeditated online investment and cyber fraud after being lured through a fake trading platform that misused the name of a well-known stock market expert.

The victim, a resident of Richards Town, stated that he and his wife were induced into investing large sums of money after his wife came across an online advertisement by an entity in mid-December 2025, promising high and guaranteed returns.

The Cybercrime Police have registered an FIR against unknown persons, charging them under the IT Act and under cheating and impersonation under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) on Friday.

According to the complaint, the couple was contacted by a woman identifying herself as Swati Verma, who claimed the investment scheme was associated with a reputed stock trader. The victims were subsequently added to a WhatsApp group, which had over 60 members.

The couple downloaded the 'Stokohni' app from the Google Play store and, between December 16, 2025, and January 5, 2026, transferred approximately ₹1.98 crore through bank transfer on different dates to multiple accounts provided by the fraudsters. The amount reportedly constituted their entire life savings. On December 31, the couple was informed that a so-called 'loan' of ₹40 lakh had been generated in their account and needed to be cleared to continue trading and they paid the amount. However, when they attempted to withdraw funds on January 9, they were told to clear another loan of ₹70 lakh, raising suspicion. The fraud came to light after the victims contacted the official online trading support team, which informed them via email on January 12 that the scheme was fraudulent.

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ISSN 0971 - 751X

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of tourists who visited Sri Lanka last year

2.3 In million. Sri Lanka received a total of 2.3 million tourists in 2025, with Indian travellers accounting for the largest share, according to figures released by the tourism authority. "India remains the undisputed leading source market, contributing 5,31,511 arrivals." PTI

Countries affected by Trump's tariffs over Greenland dispute

8 Europeans were reeling from U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement that eight countries will face 10% tariffs for opposing U.S. control of Greenland. The responses to the decision ranged from saying it risked "a dangerous downward spiral" to "China and Russia must be having a field day." AP

Accidents involving public transport buses in Delhi in 2024-25

150 Public transport buses on Delhi roads were involved in around 150 accidents, including 40 fatal crashes, in 2024-25, raising road-safety issues. Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) buses were involved in 97 road accidents in 2024-25, of which 21 were fatal, resulting in loss of lives. PTI

India's pharmaceutical exports from April to November 2025-26

20.48 In $ billion. Brazil and Nigeria are emerging as key export destinations for Indian pharmaceutical firms amid global economic uncertainties, as per Commerce Ministry data. Nigeria emerged as one of the fastest growing destinations. PTI

Palestinians killed between date of ceasefire and Jan. 13

447 Those sheltering near the territory's "yellow line" that the Israeli military withdrew to as part of the October ceasefire say they live in fear as Israeli soldiers direct near-daily fire at anyone who crosses or even lingers near it. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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How should India tackle child trafficking?

What is the Palermo Protocol? How does the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 define trafficking? How does the Constitution of India protect children from exploitation? How has the Supreme Court reacted? Why is a strong Centre-State relationship important for countering exploitation?

EXPLAINER

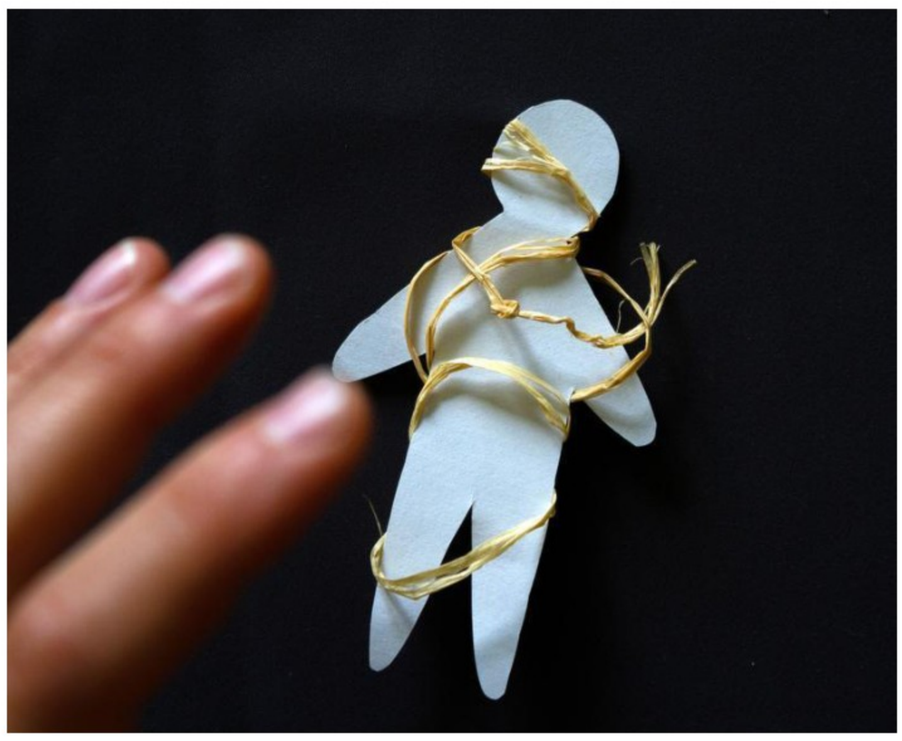
C. B. P. Srivastava

The story so far:

Child trafficking remains a deeply disturbing reality in India. The Supreme Court in its recent decision in *K. P. Kiran Kumar versus State* has given strict guidelines to prevent such offences, and held that trafficking grossly violates children's fundamental right to life as guaranteed by the Constitution. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, in 2022, about 3,098 children below 18 years were rescued. Between April 2024 and March 2025, over 53,000 children were rescued from child labour, trafficking and kidnapping across India. However, the conviction rate for such offences between 2018 and 2022 was only 4.8%.

What is child trafficking?

Internationally, the Palermo Protocol (UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children), 2000 defines child trafficking as 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.' Presently, Section 143 of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023 provides that "whoever, for the purpose of exploitation, recruits, transports, harbours, transfers, or receives, a person or persons by, using threats; or using force, or any other form of coercion; or by abduction; or by practising fraud, or deception; or by abuse of power; or by inducement, including the giving or receiving of payments or benefits, in order to achieve the consent of any person having control over the person recruited, transported, harboured, transferred or received, commits the offence of trafficking." The word 'exploitation' is wide enough in its scope and includes physical and sexual exploitation as well. It also includes any form of slavery, servitude, or forced removal of organs.



ISTOCKPHOTO

What are the rights of children?

The Constitution extensively provides for the protection of children. Articles 23 and 24 give protection from human trafficking, begging, forced labour and employment in hazardous industries. Apart from these provisions, the state is also obliged to ensure that children are not abused, and that they are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. They are protected against exploitation and moral and material abandonment under Clauses (e) and (f) of Article 39 respectively.

The BNS under Sections 98 and 99 specifically addresses the 'selling and buying' of minors. On the other hand, prevention of trafficking for sexual exploitation is provided in the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.

Furthermore, care, protection and rehabilitation for victims of child trafficking is provided under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 also intends to check such activities by providing a more comprehensive definition of trafficking by including sexual exploitation, slavery, servitude, forced labour, and organ removal. It will cover trafficking irrespective of consent.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 assumes greater significance in this regard. Apart from defining offences covering sexual assault, harassment and child pornography, the Act includes stringent punishments which inter alia include life imprisonment and even death penalty in extreme cases. One of the most important aspects of the Act is that it is gender-neutral. In order to provide rapid trials, about 400 fast track courts set up exclusively for implementing the POCSO Act are in operation across India. These courts have set a target to dispose of around 165 cases per year per court.

What has been the judicial approach?

In *Vishal Jeet versus Union of India, 1990* it was held that trafficking and child prostitution are serious socio-economic problems and hence a preventive and humanistic approach is essential to deal with them. In *M. C. Mehta versus State of Tamil Nadu, 1996*, the Court issued guidelines with a view to prohibiting employment of children in hazardous industries. Moreover, in the *Bachpan Bachao Andolan versus Union of India, 2011* case, the top court issued directions to address widespread exploitation and trafficking of children.

What next?

The guidelines point out that the socio-economic vulnerabilities of the victims must be considered, especially those from marginalised communities. Society is still unable to protect children and adolescents from being criminals or being victims of crimes. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, migration, disasters and breakdown of the family system push children into vulnerability which strengthens the trafficking chain. In recent years, the spread of social media and online platforms has contributed to such offences, especially in terms of recruitment in the name of jobs or opportunities for "modelling". The government must first ensure that the social, economic and political rights of children are well protected with the help of institutions built for the purpose. Second, it must come down heavily on traffickers and ensure that the conviction rate improves considerably so that a deterrence may be created. Moreover, a strong Union-State relationship is also required because law and order and police are State subjects.

C. B. P. Srivastava is President, Centre for Applied Research in Governance, Delhi.

THE GIST

- The Supreme Court in its recent decision in *K. P. Kiran Kumar versus State* has given strict guidelines to prevent such offences, and held that trafficking grossly violates children's fundamental right to life as guaranteed by the Constitution.
- The guidelines point out that the socio-economic vulnerabilities of the victims must be considered, especially those from marginalised communities.
- The Constitution extensively provides for the protection of children. Articles 23 and 24 give protection from human trafficking, begging, forced labour and employment in hazardous industries.

Can the Chinese government arrest its ageing problem?

Why did Chinese President Xi Jinping abolish the one-child policy in 2016? Why has Beijing increased its age of retirement? What are some of the policies China is implementing to increase child birth?

Gunjan Singh

The story so far:

The Chinese population has been consistently declining since 2022. As per the UN, by 2050 the Chinese population will be around 1.3 billion from a peak of 1.4 billion. This also means that the ratio of young to old will change and that around 40% of the population will be over 60. The oft repeated idea of China getting older before it gets richer seems unavoidable. In the hopes of avoiding this very challenge, Chinese President Xi Jinping had abolished the one-child policy in 2016 and replaced it with a two-child policy. In 2021, he extended it to a three-child policy. However, the decline has continued.

What policies did they implement?

There has been a long list of policies which the Chinese government has implemented to mitigate the ageing challenge. The most recent one was implemented on January 1, 2026. The government added 13% VAT on contraceptives and condoms. In 2025, the government announced a subsidy of 3,600 yuan (equivalent to $500 dollars) for new parents for the first three years.

There has also been a waiver of fees for students in the last year of kindergarten while also reducing the fees of kindergartens in the private sector. Moreover, the salaries of kindergarten teachers have been included in fiscal guarantees to ensure that they are timely.

Beijing also raised the retirement age last year. For men, this stands now at 63 (up from 60) and for women it is 58 (up from 55 in white collar jobs) and 55 (up from 50 in blue collar jobs). This was adopted not only to manage the declining workforce but also to postpone the added strain on the government with regards to pension funds. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) has predicted that at the current rate the state pension fund will run out of money by 2035, due to lesser number of people joining the workforce. China has also increased the age cut-off for certain civil service exams from 35 to 38 (people with masters and doctoral degrees can apply till the age of 43). There is also a government backed campaign to encourage young people to marry and have children and to build a "birth-friendly society". However, the Chinese government continues to insert itself in the lives of its citizens as there have been instances of officials calling young married women asking their menstruation dates and their plans of having children. There is also an effort to reduce the 'bride price' (transfer of money from groom's family to the bride's) too. Moreover, the government has plans to introduce love courses for single students in universities.

What are the challenges?

For Mr. Xi, increasing birthrates is linked to the 'rejuvenation of the Chinese nation'. At the 20th Party Congress, Mr. Xi asserted, "We will improve the population development strategy, establish a policy system to boost birth rates, and bring down the costs of pregnancy and childbirth, childrearing and schooling". Further, in a 2021 speech, Mr. Xi argued that Chinese women should be "good wives, good mothers", and "link their future and destiny with the future and destiny of the motherland". As per Xi Jinping, the onus to manage the Chinese population, rising or falling, is on the shoulders of women.

While on the surface it seems that the Chinese government has been undertaking a myriad of steps to boost child birth, they all seem to be failing. The one-child policy, rising costs of living and healthcare, the high cost of bearing and raising children, high unemployment, all play a crucial role when it comes to family planning. The Chinese government is also struggling to manage the existing gender gap. During the one-child policy, there was a push for bearing male children. There are now 30 million more men then women in China.

Gunjan Singh is Associate Professor at OP Jindal Global University.

THE GIST

- As per the UN, by 2050 the Chinese population will be around 1.3 billion from a peak of 1.4 billion.
- Beijing also raised the retirement age last year. For men, this stands now at 63 (up from 60) and for women it is 58 (up from 55 in white collar jobs) and 55 (up from 50 in blue collar jobs).
- For Mr. Xi, increasing birthrates is linked to the 'rejuvenation of the Chinese nation'.

Automated toll issues trigger jams on Chennai Expressway

The expressway, envisioned to cut travel time between Bengaluru and Chennai to under three hours, is still under construction; while the bulk of construction on the Karnataka side is complete, work in Tamil Nadu is still in progress

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

Many commuters using the partially completed Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway have raised concerns over frequent malfunctions at the toll plazas, saying that technical glitches in the fully automated system are causing traffic congestion and eroding the time-saving benefits promised by the project.

The expressway, envisioned to cut travel time between Bengaluru and Chennai to under three hours, is still under construction. Of the total 262 km length, around 71 km has been completed so far. The stretch between Hedigenabele, near Hoskote, and Sundarapalya, close to the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF), became informally accessible to motorists in December 2024. While the bulk of construction on the Karnataka side is complete, work in Tamil Nadu is still in progress.

Commuters say that problems arise mainly at automated toll plazas, particularly near Agrahara, where FASTag-related errors frequently prevent barricades from opening.

Ravikumar, a regular user of the stretch, said he has witnessed such issues multiple times. "Often, the FASTag lane malfunctions and vehicles pile up quickly. Since there are no staff stationed at the toll booths, motorists are left honking for several minutes. Eventually, someone comes out from a nearby control room with a handheld scanner to manually read the FASTag. Only after that does the barricade open. By then, several precious minutes are already lost," he said.

Vehicles stuck on the Bengaluru–Chennai Expressway due to frequent malfunctions, leading to traffic jams. DARSHAN DEVAIAH B.P.

One lapse delays all

Another commuter, Pavan Rao, who recently travelled from KGF to Bengaluru, said that though the expressway has significantly reduced travel time, such toll plaza errors will cause traffic issues. "I was able to reach Bengaluru from KGF in about 50 minutes, a journey that usually takes around one-and-a-half hours. However, the benefit was offset by a 25-minute delay near the Agrahara toll plaza," he said.

According to Mr. Rao, the delay was triggered when a vehicle ahead had a blacklisted or unrecharged FASTag. "Since the barrier did not open for that vehicle, all the vehicles behind were forced to wait, leading to a traffic jam. The authorities need to understand that a fully automated barrier without adequate on-ground human support can turn into chaos. At the same time, motorists must also take responsibility and ensure their FASTags are recharged on time, as one person's lapse ends up affecting dozens of others," he added.

The expressway is expected to act as a major economic catalyst along its corridor, which runs from Hoskote in Karnataka to Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu. Once fully operational, it will offer a faster and more efficient alternative to the existing 340-km route via Hosur, Krishnagiri, and Ranipet, which typically takes around six hours to traverse due to congestion and urban traffic.

Meanwhile, officials of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) have not responded regarding the toll plaza malfunctions or the lack of staff at automated booths.

Project status

Meanwhile, the progress of highway infrastructure between Bengaluru and Chennai was highlighted in a Rajya Sabha unstarred question on December 10, 2025.

Replying to the question on the project-wise status of the Chennai-Bengaluru highway widening and upgradation works, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari stated, "The entire Chennai-Bengaluru section of NH-48 and NH-44 was upgraded to four lanes during 2001-05 under the Golden Quadrilateral Programme. Subsequently, the stretch has been taken up for six-laning, wherein six projects covering a total length of approximately 318 km are under execution, out of which approximately 287 km has already been completed. Further, four projects of the Chennai-Bengaluru Expressway, covering a total length of approximately 106 km at a cost of about ₹ 5,976 crore, are also presently under execution."

Deviation by pilot damaged seven runway edge lights at Chennai airport, finds DGCA

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

A security jeep, while carrying out a routine runway inspection at Chennai Airport, reported the damage

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in its final investigation report probing runway edge lights damage incident at the Chennai International Airport in February 2025 has concluded that the pilot in command of the Star Air flight to Bengaluru deviated from the lead line on the taxiway (TWY K), aligned the aircraft on the runway 07 edge line and initiated the takeoff roll thereby damaging seven runway edge lights.

On February 25, 2025, a Star Air flight (SDG 8216) operating from Chennai to Bengaluru, with 34 passengers and six crew members, took off from the Chennai International Airport at 4.53 p.m. and landed at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) at 5.33 p.m.

All persons on board the flight were safe and there was no fire reported.

At 7.41 p.m., a security jeep, while carrying out a routine runway inspection at Chennai Airport, reported that seven runway edge lights were found broken on the right side of RWY 07.

According to DGCA, during this time (between 4.53 p.m. and 7.41 p.m.), there were a total of 45 aircraft movements (including arrivals/departures) and none of these aircrafts reported any abnormalities in the airfield or to their aircraft.

"After detailed examination, it was observed that SDG 8216, while lining up from TWY K, aligned to the extreme right side of RWY 07 and took off," the DGCA report stated.

It further added that information on this was communicated to the aircraft operator the next day to check for any damage and the operator informed that no abnormalities were observed. However, by that time, the aircraft had already flown to three sectors.

"After the completion of all the planned sectors (six) of the day, the aircraft was subjected to layover inspection at Bengaluru. During the inspection, no abnormalities were reported on both the main landing gear and nose landing gear. Post inspection, the aircraft was released for further flight," it added.

The regulator concluded the probable cause for the incident was that the pilot in command deviated from the lead line on TWY K and aligned the aircraft on the RWY07 edge line, and initiated the takeoff roll, which resulted in damage to the runway edge lights.

In its safety recommendations, the DGCA has said that the airline operator should impart appropriate training to the crew based on the probable cause and that it shall impart the airport familiarisation training to all the pilots, as per the laid down procedure in organisation flight crew training manual, before assigning the crew to a new airport.

Customs seize exotic animals smuggled from Bangkok at KIA

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Customs officials at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) intercepted a major wildlife smuggling attempt involving the illegal import of live exotic animals from Bangkok, Thailand.

Acting on specific intelligence, customs officials on Friday intercepted three passengers who arrived at Bengaluru from Bangkok on an IndiGo Airlines flight (6E-1056). During inspection of their baggage, officials recovered several live exotic animals concealed inside suitcases.

The accused have been identified as Gite Aryan Sudam, 21, Sheikh Alsana Aslam, 26, and Shaikh Zareen Aslam, 46, all residents of Maharashtra. All three were allegedly found in possession of wildlife species without valid permits or clearance. The officials suspect that the trio are mules and part of an international smuggling syndicate.

According to officials, the seized animals include squirrel monkeys, green/yellow iguanas, albino iguanas, blue iguanas, Abert's squirrels, Patagonian hares, and albino sugar gliders. Several of the animals were found dead at the time of seizure.

The species fall under various schedules of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Customs authorities stated that the import of live animals is strictly regulated under the Export-Import (EXIM) Policy and requires mandatory clearance from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), and Animal Quarantine and Certification Services (AQCS). Commercial trade of species listed under CITES and Schedule-IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act is prohibited.

Man arrested after dagger-wielding video goes viral

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Kadugodi police on Sunday arrested a 25-year-old habitual offender in connection with a road rage incident after a video showing him brandishing a dagger went viral on social media.

The case was registered at Kadugodi Police Station on Saturday following the circulation of the video, which rasied public concern. The police traced and arrested the accused on Sunday.

The accused has been identified as Sayed Arbaz Khan, 25. He is employed at a fish seller's shop at Kanakanagara in R.T. Nagar, Bengaluru.

Habitual offender

During the course of the investigation, it was found that that the accused is a habitual offender and has been previously involved in multiple criminal cases registered at different police stations in the city, police said.

The police have seized the weapon used in the incident.

Officials stated that strict action will be taken against those who threaten public safety and misuse social media to spread fear.

Flower show draws over 68,000 visitors on Sunday

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The flower show at Lalbagh Botanical Garden, themed around the life and works of renowned Kannada writer K.P. Poornachandra Tejaswi, drew a massive crowd on Sunday, with a total of 68,496 visitors.

Of these, 44,275 were adults, 10,176 were children, and 2,045 were school students.

M. Jagadeesh, Additional Director of Horticulture, Lalbagh, said the floral exhibition generated ₹31.40 lakh in revenue.

Arts exhibition open

On Sunday, the Horticulture Department also inaugurated the Ikebana and Allied Arts Exhibition, showcasing creative floral arrangements, bonsai displays, and allied horticultural arts.

Global autism convention to focus on inclusion, support

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Bengaluru will host the 3rd Global Autism Convention (GAC 2026) from January 21 to 25. The meet is being organised by the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Unit and CareADD (Centre for Advanced Autism and Developmental Disorders) at St. John's Medical College Hospital, in collaboration with several partner organisations.

The four-and-a-half-day event is expected to draw over 600 participants from India and more than 10 countries. Clinicians, educators, therapists, policymakers, parents, and self-advocates will take part. Around 150 resource persons are likely to attend.

According to the organisers, the convention aims to create a platform for sharing knowledge and practices between experts, families, and autistic individuals. The idea is to strengthen networks, develop practical solutions, and support inclusive care and education across the lifespan, the organisers said. The meet hopes to inform policy and empower communities, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

The programme will feature keynote lectures, plenaries, workshops, and panel discussions on early identification, inclusive education, mental health, family support, and policy frameworks. A key feature of the event is its multidisciplinary approach that brings together research, clinical experience, education, policy and lived experience.

The convention is being organised in partnership with the Association for Severe Handicaps and Autism (ASHA), the Spastics Society of Karnataka, Shristi Special Academy, the Autism Society of India, ALFAA - Assisted Living for Autistic Adults, and Bubbles Center for Autism, along with other national and international collaborators. The organisers said the outcome they expect is stronger collaboration within the autism community to improve early identification, management strategies, and caregiver support, and to shape policies that expand education, and employment opportunities for those on the autism spectrum.

Tourism projects worth ₹367.32 cr. to be rolled out across State

Rishita Khanna
BENGALURU

From audio-guided heritage walks and buggy shuttles at Bidar Fort to an 11.7-km cycle track linking Mattu and Padukere beaches in Udupi and upgraded tonga stands in Mysuru, the Karnataka Tourism Department has lined up a range of service- and infrastructure-focused works across the State.

These together form part of tourism projects worth ₹367.32 crore, under which tenders for some components have already been floated, while others are expected to be issued shortly, officials said.

The State Tourism Department will implement nine projects sanctioned under four central programmes- Swadesh Darshan 2.0, Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD), Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI), and the PRASHAD scheme. The projects span heritage destinations, eco-tourism sites, and major pilgrimage centres in Ballari, Mysuru, Bidar, Udupi, Belagavi, and Bengaluru.

A file photo of the Bidar Fort.

Eco-tourism

The Roerich and Devika Rani Estate at Tataguni in Bengaluru, which has been under discussion for its redevelopment as a public cultural and tourism space, is among the projects now being taken up under the SASCI scheme.

The officials told *The Hindu* that eco-tourism components of the Tataguni project include nature trails, an aviary safari loop, zipline, and rope course. "Plans also include an eco-wellness plaza with waterfront and garden-view cottages, glamping facilities, boating and kayaking, an open-air theatre, a floating jetty, and a perfume garden," the official added.

The eco-tourism project in Udupi district spans three locations- Mattu Beach, Padukere Beach, and Dariya Bahadurgarh Island- and centres on improving how visitors move along the coastline. With an outlay of ₹10 crore, the project's key component is an 11.7-km cycle track connecting Mattu and Padukere beaches, alongside basic tourist facilities designed using pitched thatch roofs, bamboo poles, and wooden laminates, the officials explained.

Traveller Nooks

Hampi has been sanctioned ₹25.64 crore under the Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme for the development of "Traveller Nooks", the one-stop, multi-utility amenity centres for tourists. Tenders have been floated for 20 such units which will include facilities such as feeding rooms and sanitary pad vending machines.

Mysuru has two projects under the same scheme. An Ecological Experience Zone, estimated at ₹18.47 crore, includes an eco-view tower, canopy and lake walks, an eco-bridge connector, rope bridges and zipline facilities, among other attractions. In addition, ₹2.71 crore has been sanctioned for a Heritage Experience Zone centred on traditional tonga rides, with plans for three tonga stands and the upgradation of two stables.

Audio guides

Under the Challenge Based Destination Development sub-scheme, Bidar has been sanctioned ₹25 crore for heritage tourism development focused on the Bidar Fort and the Papnash Lake area. The proposed works include heritage walks supported by audio guides, information centres and heritage lighting aimed at improving visitor engagement with the site. In addition, the project proposes a tree house, watch tower, cycle track, forest trail, and lake decks.

Pilgrimage infra

The pilgrimage infrastructure accounts for a substantial share of the outlay under the PRASHAD scheme. At the Sri Chamundeshwari Devi Temple in Mysuru, ₹45.71 crore has been sanctioned for the temple and viewpoint development, along with IT components, while an additional ₹16.32 crore is being spent from the State funds on works at Devikeri, the Nandi State Pavilion, Devipada, and other viewpoints.

Another ₹100-crore project under the same scheme focuses on the development of the Savadatti Yallammagudda in Belagavi district, while Bidar's Papnash Temple has been allotted more than ₹22 crore for pilgrim amenities and site development.

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, AJAY Kumar Arisetti s/o Arisetty Gunnayya Gupta r/o F 0736, Divyashree Republic of Whitefield, Bangalore 560066 have changed my name to Arisetti Ajay Kumar dated 12 Jan 2026 sworn before notary Indira S S.

I, KM Kumari Nitu Ray, D/o Shri Shiv Sharan Rai, R/at Flat No.011, SLV Defence Orchid, Baba Nagar, Kattigenahalli, Bengaluru-560064, have changed by name from KM Kumari Nitu Ray to Neetu Rai vide affidavit dated 16-01-2026 sworn before Notary S.R. Ravikumar, Bengaluru.

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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

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S R SRINIVASA MURTHY
Retired: Survey of India, GOI
DOB: 5.1.1932 - DOD: 29.1.2025

Varshabdikam on 19.01.2026 at 11:00 AM. Veda Parayanam at Satya Pramoda Annexe Hall, Pampa Maha Kavi Road,Basavangudi, Bangalore.
Arathi, Chitra & Murthy's Family
M: 9902034050

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GETTY IMAGES

Soft matter: the unusual yet persistent physics inside your bathroom cabinet

Every morning, as you use either your toothpaste or shampoo, you engage with soft matter, materials that flow like liquids under force but hold their shape at rest. This fascinating behaviour challenges our understanding of material properties

Indresh Yadav

Every morning, you perform a small physics activity without realising it. You squeeze toothpaste out of a tube. You apply a force and the paste flows out like a liquid. When you stop squeezing, the toothpaste stays on the brush, holding its shape against gravity. It doesn't drip, spread or collapse into a puddle.

This simple act confronts us with a fundamental question in physics: how do materials respond to forces and what makes something like toothpaste flow when pushed yet remain solid when left alone?

Solid or liquid?

In school, materials are neatly divided into solids and liquids. Solids resist deformation and maintain their shape whereas liquids flow under even the slightest force. But toothpaste, shampoo, gels, and creams do neither in the usual way. They belong to a broad class of materials that modern physics calls soft-matter materials: they can behave like solids or flow like liquids depending on the forces applied and the timescales involved.

What makes soft materials different lies in their internal structure. Their basic building blocks are far larger than atoms or simple molecules, yet far too small to see with the naked eye. In personal care products, these building blocks can be small droplets, microscopic clusters or long and flexible macromolecules suspended in a fluid. Because they are relatively large, even gentle actions like squeezing a tube, shaking a bottle or spreading with a brush or finger, can rearrange them.

Equally important are the forces holding these structures together. In hard solids, atoms are bound by strong interactions that lock them in place. In ordinary liquids, the interactions are weaker, allowing molecules to move freely. But the molecules themselves are small and their own structure doesn't change under gentle forces. In soft materials, on the other hand, the forces between the building blocks are weak and easily disrupted. This makes their internal structure fragile but also highly adaptable. As a result, how soft materials behave depends not only on how strongly they are pushed but also on how quickly. The same force applied in different ways can produce very different outcomes. A slow, gentle stress may leave the internal structure largely intact while a rapid or sudden stress can rearrange it completely, allowing the material to flow.

This sensitivity to both force and time is a defining feature of soft matter. Squeeze a tube of toothpaste slowly and it may barely budge. But squeeze it suddenly and it flows out with ease. Shake a bottle of shampoo and it will pour out freely, but handle it gently and it will feel thick and resistant. In each case, the same material responds differently depending on the rate at which it is forced to move. In fact many shampoos contain long and flexible worm-like molecules dispersed in a liquid. At rest, these molecules are tangled together, forming a loose internal network that gives the shampoo its thickness. When you shake the bottle or pour it out, the molecules are stretched and become aligned with each other, which makes it easier for them to slide past one another.

Under the influence of this motion, the network – the connections between molecules – continually breaks and reforms. The worm-like micelles can for a brief period break into shorter segments and then reconnect, reducing the resistance to flowing. Thus the shampoo becomes more runny. Once the molecules stop moving past each other, they slowly coil back and become entangled with each other once more. This way the network is restored and the shampoo becomes thicker again.

Toothpaste behaves in a similar way, with microscopic structures that are rearranged under pressure and which reassemble when the force is removed. This behaviour is remarkable because the microscopic building blocks are constantly being reorganised, breaking apart, reconnecting, and reshaping themselves in a reversible way. This repeat making and unmaking allows soft materials to adapt smoothly to external forces.

In the end, what we usually call solids and liquids seems to depend on how a material responds to force over time. On very short time scales, even a liquid can resist deformation like a solid while a solid can slowly flow if enough force is applied or enough time is allowed.

The pitch drop experiment

At the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, scientists have been conducting an experiment since 1927, known as the pitch drop experiment, to test the viscosity of pitch, or bitumen, which is a substance derived from tar. At room temperature, pitch seems like a normal solid and can be shattered with a hammer. But according to scientists, pitch is really a liquid with extremely high viscosity – around 200-billion-times that of water.

To demonstrate this, a physics professor named Thomas Parnell heated pitch and poured it into a sealed glass funnel in 1927. After leaving it undisturbed for three years so it could cool and stabilise, he removed a seal from the bottom of the container, allowing the pitch to drip under gravity. In the last almost 100 years, only nine drops have fallen, with the ninth drop in April 2014. Even though this is excruciatingly slow, the fact that it's dropping at all shows that pitch is in fact a liquid. The next drop is expected by 2030. Similar experiments are underway in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

Physicists study this force and time-dependent behaviour in a field called rheology, which examines how materials deform and flow under applied stress. The roots of this study go back to the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, who captured it in the aphorism "panta rhei", meaning "everything flows". In soft matter, this metaphor for continuous change, which is in fact a feature inherent to all matter, becomes tangible at the timescales and force levels we encounter in everyday life. Beyond their practical usefulness, soft materials offer insights into the deeper scientific principles of motion, force, flow, and change.

The next time you open your bathroom cabinet, remember you are not just handling personal care products. You are handling materials carefully engineered to balance force and flow, structure, and softness. In their gentle response to a squeeze or a shake lies a rich, hidden chapter of modern physics, playing out out of sight, every day.

Indresh Yadav is an assistant professor in the Department of Physics at IIT-Bhubaneswar.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

A quiz on Indira Gandhi on the occasion of her becoming Prime Minister for the first time on this date 60 years ago

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
Though Indira Gandhi became India's first and only woman Prime Minister on January 19, 1966, she was the not the world's first. Which Asian leader has that distinction?

QUESTION 2
Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister following the death of which incumbent premier and where?

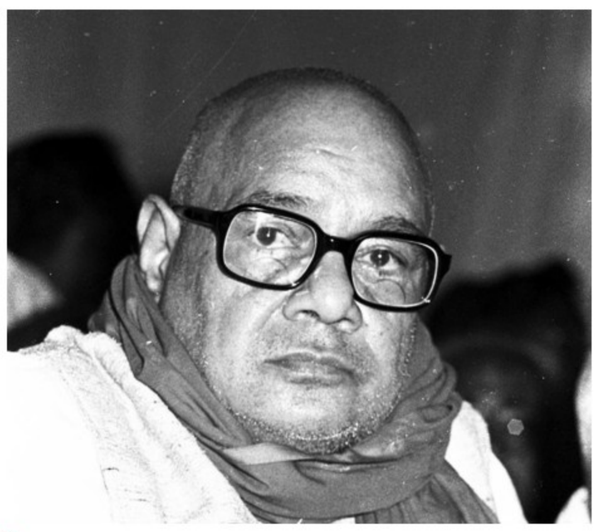
QUESTION 3
Indira Gandhi defeated this veteran political figure to become the leader of the Congress Party and by extension the PM. Name the respected leader who became India's PM in the 1970s.

QUESTION 4
With a cumulative tenure of 15 years and 350 days, she is India's second-longest-serving Indian Prime Minister. Who holds the record?

QUESTION 5
Indira Gandhi was elected to the Lok Sabha from three constituencies starting with Rae Bareli. Which are the other two constituencies?

QUESTION 6
Name the assassins who cut short her tenure as PM on October 31, 1984.

QUESTION 7
How many women did she appoint to full cabinet rank during her terms in office?



Visual question:
Name this Janata Party leader who defeated Indira Gandhi in the 1977 Lok Sabha elections. THE HINDU PHOTO ARCHIVES

Questions and Answers to the January 15 edition of the daily quiz: 1. In 1974, ISRO acquired technology from France in exchange for 100 man-years of engineering work, helping produce parts for this European rocket. **Ans: Ariane**
2. To steer the massive first stage, the PSLV injects this chemical solution into one side of the nozzle's exhaust flow. **Ans: Strontium perchlorate**
3. In February 2017, the PSLV-C37 mission set a world record by launching 104 satellites in a single flight. This SpaceX mission broke the record. **Ans: Transporter-1**
4. Instead of discarding the PSLV's fourth stage (PS4) as debris, ISRO often repurposes it as a stabilised orbital platform called POEM. Expand POEM. **Ans: PSLV Orbital Experiment Module**
5. The PSLV rocket's first stage solid motor is encased in _____ steel. **Ans: Maraging**
Visual: Between the SLV and the PSLV programmes, ISRO ran this programme for seven years. **Ans: Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle**
Early Birds: Tito Shiladitya| Haridas Pal| Sukdev Shet| Gaurav Deshmukh| K.N. Viswanathan

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

His book club event was shambolic

I do not like going to my new school. The class leader is very arrogant and officious

S. Upendran

What is the meaning of 'shambolic'? How is the word pronounced?
Cricket fans who watched the recent Ashes series that took place in Australia will be familiar with this word. Commentators from England used it quite frequently to describe the English team's disastrous performance. Former England captain, Michael Vaughan, referred to his country's preparation for the ill-fated series as 'shambolic'. The word is mostly limited to informal contexts in British English. When you refer to a situation as being 'shambolic', what you are suggesting is that it is disorganised and chaotic. It is difficult to make sense of the situation. The word, which is a combination of 'shambles' and the suffix 'bolic', can be used with people as well.

Don't promote her. She's too shambolic to be put in charge of any department.

As for the pronunciation, the word consists of three syllables; the first rhymes with 'Pam', 'dam' and 'Sam'. The vowel in the second syllable sounds like the 'o' in 'hot', 'not' and 'got', while the final syllable is pronounced like the word 'lick'. The word is pronounced 'sham-BO-lick' with the stress on the second syllable.

What is the meaning of "They made a bomb when they sold the house"? (John Abraham, Bengaluru)
The word 'bomb' is frequently used in informal contexts to refer to money. For example, if you were to say, 'Ajay's new car cost him a bomb', what you are suggesting is that the vehicle was rather expensive – he spent a lot of money on it. Here are a few more examples.

Sheba spent a bomb on her wedding.

On the other hand, when someone 'makes a bomb' on something, they make a lot of money.

Sashi made a bomb in the stock market.

How is the word 'officious' pronounced? (K. Jambunathan)
The word consists of three syllables; the 'o' in the first, and the 'iou' in the third sound like the 'a' in 'china'. The 'ffic' in the second is pronounced like the word 'fish'. The word is pronounced 'e-FISH-es' with the stress on the second syllable. It comes from the Latin 'officiosus' meaning 'full of courtesy, dutiful'. When the word was borrowed into English, it had a positive meaning; it referred to someone who helped people. But over a period of time, the word underwent a radical change in meaning; today, it is mostly used to indicate disapproval. When you refer to an individual as being 'officious', what you are suggesting is that he is meddlesome, someone who keeps annoying people by telling them what they should and should not do – especially about trivial matters.

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Puerile:
of or characteristic of a child; displaying or suggesting a lack of maturity

Synonyms: adolescent, juvenile

Usage: *Nobody liked his puerile jokes.*

Pronunciation:
newsth.live/puerilepron

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈpjʊɹɪl/, /ˈpjʊɹaɪl/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

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Vanisha-Amit, Saurabh-Neha, Sneha-Aditya,
Natasha-Varun, Vartika-Utsav, Atulya-Isheta,
Shristi-Raj, and Divyesh-Jake

Aria, Sanaya, Riyana, Eshana, Armaan,
Sohum, Siaara, Suhana, Rayaan, Yuveer, Ruhan,
Ahaan, Aaryav, Trigya, Shorya, Aryaman,
Jaiveer, Miraya, Anegita, Auhrim, Eka, and Vishwa

Polyester national flags snatching away livelihood of khadi workers

Manikanth Gangane
HUBBALLI

Women making khadi flags at the country's first BIS recognised national flag manufacturing unit at Bengeri in Hubballi. KIRAN BAKALE

For Shantha Basavaraj Gundgal, the national flag manufacturing unit at Bengeri in Hubballi is not just a workplace but a life support. Having lost her husband nine years ago, the unit helped her eke out a living and support her two college-going children.

"This work provided me with a stable income and also lets me take up other temporary jobs on a part-time basis," she said. However, she is worried now because the workload at the unit has come down because of a dip in sales and the pending stock of national flags. This has come at a time when she has to repay her loan at the rate of ₹630 per week.

Another worker at the unit Ratna Harvi initially used to earn ₹6,000 to ₹7,000 per month, but now gets only half of it. Children in college and the mounting loan on the small grocery store that her husband runs, keeps them worried.

Annapoorna Doddmani, who manages the unit ensuring strict adherence to Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) guidelines also has the additional responsibility of guiding visitors through the production process, from sourcing raw materials to printing the Ashoka Chakra, ensuring colour durability, and demonstrating the proper folding method for easy flag hoisting. She too looks concerned. "We have received fewer orders compared to previous years," she said.

Majority of the workers in the all-women flag manufacturing unit run by Karnataka Khadi Gramodyoga Samyukta Sangha (KKGSS) have similar stories. There are hundreds of women working in khadi units spread across North Karnataka district from where the flag unit sources its raw materials and they are all affected.

The reason

The main reason for the unit being in distress is the amendment brought to Clause 1.2 of Part 1 of the Flag Code of India, which permitted use of polyester and machine-made cloth to stitch the national flag, relaxing the earlier mandatory use of hand-spun and hand-woven khadi cloth.

"The polyester flags are cheaper and come in different sizes, which are not permitted under the Flag Code. Consequently the sale of khadi flags is hit. We are under pressure to reduce the workforce, but we are managing somehow by assigning different roles in other khadi units. But we are not sure how long we can continue doing so," said Shivanand Mataphati, secretary of KKGSS.

Declining sales

After the debacle caused by the pandemic, the unit had recovered with good sales to the tune of ₹3.94 crore during 2022-23. As the Union government amended the Flag Code to permit flags of polyester and machine-made cloth to facilitate production of many flags during 'Har Ghar Tiranga' drive, the flag sales dipped to ₹1.71 crore during 2023-24 and further dropped to ₹1.21 crore in 2024-25. In the current fiscal, the unit has been able to sell only flags worth ₹65.51 lakh till December.

The women at the flag unit and khadi workers are only hoping that the Centre withdraws the amendment to the Flag Code.

However, the future appears to be bleak as repeated memoranda to the Centre on the issue have not received even a reply.

Campaign begins to promote khadi flags

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

A group of like-minded people led by Santosh Naragund and others in collaboration with the Karnataka Khadi Gramodyoga Samyukta Sangh (KKGSS), Hubballi, have launched an awareness campaign to promote the use of khadi national flags and protect BIS-approved national flag-making units.

As part of the 'Fly Khadi Tricolour, Buy Khadi Tricolour' initiative, they plan to expand sales through e-commerce platforms, and promote these centres as heritage sites to sustain production and employment. "Under the initiative khadi flags are being promoted through various social media platforms," Lingaraj Dharwadshettar, one among the coordinators, said.

Visit tinyurl.com/flykhaditricolour for details.

Zameer invites Surjewala for allotment of houses event

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Housing, Waqf and Minority Welfare Minister B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan met AICC general secretary and Karnataka in charge Randeep Singh Surjewala in Kaithal, Haryana, and invited him to participate in the large-scale housing allotment programme scheduled in Hubballi on January 24.

Congress leader Deepak Chinchore was present during the meeting.

The event, to be attended by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, will see the Karnataka Slum Development Board allot 42,345 houses to poor families.

sThis is the second phase of allotment. In the first phase, 36,789 houses were already handed over to beneficiaries. A third phase is planned for April-May, when another 30,000 units are expected to be distributed.

In all, the State is constructing 1,80,253 houses, with the government providing ₹4 lakh per unit, in addition to Central and State subsidies. Beneficiaries will pay ₹1 lakh for ownership. As many as 20,363 slum dwellers will receive a symbolic record of rights during the event.

Siddaramaiah dismisses demand for CBI probe into Ballari violence

Chief Minister questions the BJP's moral right to demand such a probe, when the saffron party, during its rule, had failed to hand over even a single case to the Central agency

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah speaking to reporters at Mysuru airport on Sunday. M.A. SRIRAM

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has dismissed the Bharatiya Janata Party's demand for a CBI probe into the recent violence in Ballari that claimed one life.

Fielding queries from reporters in Mysuru on Sunday, Mr. Siddaramaiah questioned the BJP's moral right to demand a CBI probe into the Ballari episode when the saffron party, during its rule in the State, had failed to hand over even a single case demanded by then Opposition Congress to the Central agency.

On the contrary, Mr. Siddaramaiah said he as a Chief Minister had entrusted several cases to the CBI for investigation including the lottery scam and the Soujanya case.

Reacting to the BJP's plan to launch an agitation over the Ballari issue, the Chief Minister said it was left to the Opposition to decide its course of protests, but the government will respond to it.

When his attention was drawn to BJP leaders B. Sriramulu and G. Janardhana Reddy attacking the Congress leaders, using allegedly disrespectful references, Mr. Siddaramaiah said it exposed the BJP's political culture.

"Why did they earlier say that Mr. Janardhana Reddy should not come to Ballari? Who behaved as if it was a republic of Ballari? Justice Santosh Hegde had submitted a report when he was the Lokayukta," he said.

Mr. Siddaramaiah also recalled that Congress leaders were not given any space to campaign for their candidate in the Lok Sabha elections to Ballari during the BJP regime. He said he finally held a public meeting near a Kuruba community temple in Ballari.

"This one example is enough to show that they do not have faith in democracy, but they believed in dictatorship," he said.

Claiming that the BJP did not believe in parliamentary system either, Mr. Siddaramaiah said the Congress need not learn lessons from those who resorted to "goondagiri".

Responding to the BJP's allegation that the Congress had created a "Republic of Karnataka", the Chief Minister said the Congress party believed in democracy, the Constitution, and its ideals.

He alleged that there was a political motive behind the BJP's plan to hold an agitation in Ballari.

Reacting to BJP's claim that the decision to convene a special session of the legislature was "political misuse", Mr. Siddaramaiah said the Constitution mandates that a joint session of the legislature should be convened in the new year.

Also, the session will demand the restoration of the MGNREGA that had been brought in by the UPA government by withdrawing the newly introduced VB-G RAM G Act.

With regard to the Lokayukta raid on Deputy Commissioner of Excise and his mention of Excise Minister's name in an audio, Mr. Siddaramaiah said the government would not obstruct any legal proceedings in the matter.

The Chief Minister also remarked that Kempaiah, who was the president of the contractors' association, had alleged that a 40% commission was being collected during the BJP regime.

₹2,500-cr. bribery racket has taken place in Excise Department, says Ashok

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R. Ashok addressing a press conference, in Bengaluru on Sunday.

Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok on Sunday alleged that a bribe transaction worth around ₹2,500 crore had taken place in the Excise Department and demanded the resignation of Excise Minister R.B. Thimmapur, holding Chief Minister Siddaramaiah directly responsible.

Addressing a press conference in Bengaluru, Mr. Ashok claimed that bribes collected through liquor licensing were being diverted for election expenses. He said Excise officials were being given revenue collection targets and licences were being "auctioned" in violation of norms.

He referred to the recent arrest of Excise Deputy Commissioner Jagadish Nayak, who was caught by Lokayukta police allegedly accepting a bribe of ₹25 lakh.

According to Mr. Ashok, bribe rates had been fixed at ₹1.25 crore for each CL-7 licence (totalling about ₹1,225 crore for 750 licences) and ₹1.5 crore for CL-2 licences (amounting to ₹925 crore for 650 licences). He also alleged bribe collections under CL-9 and mini-brewery licences, adding that the total was about ₹2,500 crore.

He further claimed that audio clips suggested payments being made to the Minister or his son.

He said that similar charges had been echoed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had alleged that Excise funds were being routed to election campaigns outside the State.

The BJP had earlier exposed irregularities related to the Gruha Lakshmi scheme, the Valmiki corporation, and land at Kogilu Cross, and vowed to pursue the Excise issue "to its logical end", he said.

On the drug trafficking issue, the BJP leader said that while the Home Minister had claimed that action was under way, the Chief Minister's recent review meeting had revealed lapses within the police department.

He said the Maharashtra police entering Karnataka to pursue drug cases had raised questions on the effectiveness of local policing. He alleged that the drug network involved around 180 individuals, extended into prisons, and had police complicity. "Police stations have become Congress offices," he remarked, alleging that law enforcement had become selective and influenced by money and political connections.

He cited the case of Congress leader Rajeev Gowda from Sidlaghatta, who, he said, had not been arrested despite repeated demands. He also alleged that a woman official in Varuna - the Chief Minister's constituency - was threatened, claiming similar incidents across districts and asserting that MLAs and local strongmen were intimidating officials.

"The Chief Minister has lost grip over administration," Mr. Ashok said, adding that the government was in a "paralysed state".

BJP slams DKS for skipping World Economic Forum

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

B.Y. Vijayendra

Taking serious exception to Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar skipping his scheduled visit to Davos to attend the World Economic Forum, BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra has termed this as apathy of the Congress leadership towards governance and their distorted priorities

In a social media post, Mr. Vijayendra said: "The World Economic Forum at Davos was a golden opportunity to showcase our State as a unique and attractive destination for global investors. It was an opportunity that could have driven employment generation and promoted industrial growth beyond Bengaluru."

At a time when the State desperately needs development and economic revival, the Deputy Chief Minister chose to skip this crucial global platform, citing pressing engagements in New Delhi and Bengaluru, he said, and remarked that one did not need much imagination to guess what those engagements were.

"Several supporters of the Deputy Chief Minister have openly spoken about a change in leadership post Sankranti, and it now appears that Davos became the first casualty of this internal tug-of-war for power," he alleged.

"This pattern of misplaced priorities is not new. When Germany's Chancellor visited Karnataka, neither the CM nor the Deputy Chief Minister had the courtesy to welcome him or follow basic protocol. Such repeated diplomatic and institutional lapses send a damaging signal to the global community. In the end, it is Karnataka and its people who pay the price. Jobs are lost, investments move to neighbouring States, and the aspirations of Karnataka's youth are being sacrificed at the altar of Congress' infighting, insecurity, and obsession with self-preservation," he alleged.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Family divide beyond party lines

Elections to two local cooperative bodies had led to months of political bickering between the four powerful families of Belagavi district – the

Kattis and the Savadis on the one side and the Jarkiholi brothers and the Jolles on the other. It seems however, Ramesh Katti *(pictured)*, former MP and BJP leader, has made peace with the Jolles (who are with the BJP), while his anger towards the Jarkiholi brothers (split between the BJP and the Congress) continues.

He has cautioned that he would not allow the Jarkiholi brothers to set foot in Hukkeri, his native taluk. "They tried to take over the rural electricity cooperative society in Hukkeri, which was managed by my family for over 20 years, but we defeated them. Our influence in the District Central Cooperative bank elections ensured that one of our own became the chairman. But if the Jarkiholis continue to interfere in our area, we will teach them a lesson in the zilla and taluk panchayat polls," he said at a recent event.

His reference to the DCC bank chairman, however, was off the mark. The current chairman is Annasaheb Jolle, who had unseated Mr. Ramesh Katti as the bank chairman in 2024. The electricity cooperative and the DCC bank polls were held later. Mr. Katti's followers are saying that this is a sign of a temporary peace brokered by the BJP high command between the two leaders, while there has been no such attempt at reducing hostilities between Mr. Katti and Ramesh Jarkiholi and Balachandra Jarkiholi, who are also in the BJP. Senior leaders of the BJP in the district and taluk levels are all mum about this.

A different contest

Following the BJP-led Mahayuti's victory in the Maharashtra local body elections, political parties in Karnataka are expected to recalibrate their strategies for the upcoming polls to five city corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA). While the BJP and the JD(S) are likely to finalise their alliance and seat-sharing arrangements, the Congress is preparing to roll out a series of development initiatives ahead of the election schedule.

Mumbai and Bengaluru, however, differ sharply in political character. While the financial capital witnessed a multi-party contest, the Garden City is expected to see a direct fight between the Congress and the BJP. The BJP currently holds power at both the Centre and in Maharashtra and secured a sweeping victory in Mumbai along with Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena. In Bengaluru, for the first time, elections will be held simultaneously to five city corporations under the GBA framework. Although Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok has claimed that the GBA polls would mark the beginning of the end for the Congress, the BJP will first need to put its own house in order to take on the ruling party across the five corporations.

Leadership fatigue

Congress leaders in Karnataka appear to be growing weary of the constant focus on leadership change.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy *(pictured)* remarked that attention should be directed towards the State's development rather than revisiting leadership issues day after day.

Taking an apparent swipe at the media, he said excessive emphasis was being placed on the leadership tussle instead of governance and development, arguing that leadership change was not a matter for public debate. With no clarity on the issue, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar also maintained that leadership decisions were the prerogative of the high command and should not be discussed publicly on a daily basis.

Rishikesh Bahadur Desai
Nagesh Prabhu

Seer: Lord Krishna's idol installed in Udupi to spread God's message to universe

The Shiroor Mutt seer Vedavardhana Tirtha was speaking at the Paryaya Darbar

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Shiroor Mutt seer Vedavardhana Tirtha being carried in a palanquin during the 253rd Paryaya Mahotsava in Udupi on Sunday. UMESH S. SHETTIGAR

The 31st seer of Shiroor Mutt, Vedavardhana Tirtha, who ascended the Sarvajna Peetha during the 253rd Paryaya of Udupi Sri Krishna Mutt on Sunday said that Madhwacharya, the proponent of Dwaita philosophy, installed the idol of Balakrishna in Udupi not just for worship, but to spread the message of Lord Krishna to the universe.

Speaking at the Paryaya Darbar after taking over the responsibility of managing the affairs of the Sri Krishna Mutt for the next two years, Vedavardhana Tirtha said that divinity resides in every human being and creature. Every human being and creature should be loved and respected.

The swamiji urged devotees living in faraway places to come to Sri Krishna Mutt during holidays and serve in their capacity as volunteers in various activities of the mutt by staying in the mutt's vicinity.

The seer who took to 'sanyasa' on May 14, 2021, said that people should have a certain degree of fear factor, which acts as a deterrent to do wrong deeds. Only then the universe will be a better place to live. The selfless devotion towards the supreme power is good. The God accepts the true devotion of the people, he added. Describing Vedas as treasure of knowledge, he asked people to imbibe the qualities propagated by the teachings in the Vedas.

Seer of Palimar Mutt Vidyadheesha Tirtha said that slaughtering of cows should stop in the country.

Seer of Sode Mutt Vishwavallabha Tirtha said that moral qualities are important to lead a pious life. "When people follow morality, there will not be trust deficit. The trust will grow in the society," he said.

Rajya Sabha Member D. Veerendra Heggade said that the message of Lord Krishna should spread to a larger set of people during the Paryaya of Sri Shiroor Mutt. Member of Parliament of Mysuru Yaduveer Wadiyar said that having a legacy of over 800 years is the greatness of Udupi Paryaya. "Let there be an effort to safeguard the 'dharma' by all," he said.

'I'm an aspirant for CM's post in 2028'

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Minister Satish Jarkiholi speaking to reporters at Pandomatti in Davangere district on Sunday.

"I am not an aspirant for the Chief Minister's post now. However, I am an aspirant for the post in 2028," Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi has said.

He was responding to some of his followers holding banners and raising slogans saying: "Satish Jarkiholi, Next CM" and "Our Sahukar, Our CM".

"It is natural for a leader's followers to expect or demand that their leader becomes the Chief Minister. There is nothing wrong in that. It is not new too. However, I am not aspiring for the post now. I am an aspirant for 2028," he told reporters on Sunday in Pandomatti of Davangere district.

Responding to a demand by Channagiri MLA Shivaganga Basavaraj, who is considered a close follower of Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, that the Congress high command should resolve the confusion over leadership change in Karnataka, Mr. Jarkiholi said that it has been the demand of all Congress MLAs, not just one, in the State.

"There is confusion in the party over this issue. Everyone wants the confusion to be resolved. However, the high command will decide on it and there is no need for discussion," he said. "I am not a claimant now, but I would support whoever is the Chief Minister or whoever becomes the Chief Minister," he added. He said that the visits of the Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister and some Ministers, including himself, to New Delhi are not to be seen as political trips. "All of us have pending works with Union government departments and we need to travel often. It does not mean we go there only to meet the high command leaders or discuss issues like leadership change," he said.

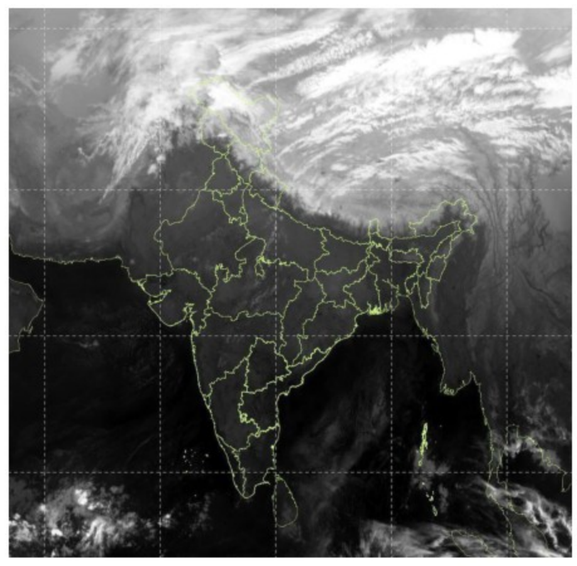
He said that Mr. Shivakumar has decided to cancel his scheduled visit to the Davos economic summit because of his political responsibilities in election-going States like Assam, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu and the local body polls like the Greater Bengaluru Authority and taluk and zilla panchayat elections.

Earlier, Mr. Jarkiholi spoke at functions marking the death anniversary of Sri Sangamanath Swami and Sri Channabasava Swami. He also addressed a gathering after inaugurating a Basava Tatva convention in the local Virakta Math. He said that the principles of equality, dignity of labour and distribution of wealth preached by Basavanna are eternally relevant for all places and all times.

Speaker U.T. Khader and other leaders were present.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Cold wave conditions very likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh. Dense fog very likely in isolated places over Bihar, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Punjab, Sub Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	29.5	13.0	Kozhikode	—	32.2	23.6
Ahmedabad	—	27.7	14.8	Kurnool	—	34.2	16.7
Aizawl	—	26.4	13.5	Lucknow	—	—	—
Allahabad	—	25.8	6.6	Madurai	—	31.6	19.6
Bengaluru	—	29.7	14.9	Mangaluru	—	32.6	21.2
Bhopal	—	—	11.0	Mumbai	—	28.0	20.4
Bhubaneswar	—	30.2	10.9	Mysuru	—	—	15.2
Chandigarh	—	23.4	5.5	New Delhi	—	22.0	8.0
Chennai	—	28.7	18.7	Patna	—	23.2	9.6
Coimbatore	—	32.0	17.6	Port Blair	—	29.6	21.8
Dehradun	—	23.4	7.2	Puducherry	—	29.8	17.3
Gangtok	—	14.6	7.0	Pune	—	30.5	16.7
Goa	—	31.2	19.9	Raipur	—	31.4	12.9
Guwahati	—	27.1	13.2	Ranchi	—	26.6	26.6
Hubballi	—	31.1	13.8	Shillong	—	17.7	7.4
Hyderabad	—	32.0	14.4	Shimla	—	17.2	6.2
Imphal	—	24.8	6.7	Srinagar	—	13.3	-4.7
Jaipur	—	26.0	13.2	Thiruvananthapuram	—	31.6	24.1
Kochi	—	30.6	23.0	Tiruchi	—	29.3	19.0
Kohima	—	17.0	6.4	Vijayawada	—	—	—
Kolkata	—	25.2	13.0	Visakhapatnam	—	28.2	17.7

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.32	..42	10	... 110	...129	
Bengaluru	...6	..21	39	... 169	...122	
Chennai	...4	6	54	... 143	...110	
Delhi	.11	..86	81	... 477	.....—	
Hyderabad	...8	..37	35	... 102	...101	
Kolkata	.12	..48	41	... 264	...196	
Lucknow	...7	..44	39	... 306	...207	
Mumbai	..—	1	14	 71	...104	
Pune	..—	..50	18	... 134	98	
Visakhapatnam	.49	143	27	... 259	...222	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 458 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 10

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Former CPI(M) MLA from Kerala joins BJP

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Three-time MLA and Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] leader from Idukki S. Rajendran joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday.

The move comes ahead of the Assembly elections. Mr. Rajendran accepted the party membership from BJP State president Rajeev Chandrasekhar in Thiruvananthapuram.

Mr. Rajendran had represented the Devikulam constituency as a CPI(M) member in 2006, 2011, and 2016.

He was also a member of the party's district committee.

A.P. to launch quantum skilling course for students

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh has enrolled 55,000 students on a mass quantum skilling course on "Quantum Computing: Quantum Algorithms and Qiskit" through the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) set to begin from Monday.

The programme is being organised by the Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education. The NPTEL course which will be delivered by faculty from IIT-Madras and IBM Quantum will offer hands-on exposure to quantum algorithms, quantum error correction and Qiskit programming to equip students with relevant skills.

Balancing act

Acrobats perform on a Chinese pole at the 57th edition of Fit India Sundays on Cycle at Gachibowli Stadium, Hyderabad, organised by the Sports Authority of India along with the Telangana government, on Sunday. G. RAMAKRISHNA

Media cannot involve govt. in 'personal fights', says Revanth

R. Ravikanth Reddy
HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy attends a meeting of his party workers in Khammam on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday asked the media not to drag his Cabinet colleagues into their personal fight, and said that media personnel could approach him directly if there are any allegations against his Cabinet colleagues.

"We are working together as a team, unlike the earlier regime where only one person used to make all the decisions," he said. He cautioned party workers not to allow the State government to be dragged into conflicts between two media organisations, and urged voters not to give another opportunity to the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). He made these comments at a meeting of party workers in the united Khammam district.

Referring to the row over Singareni mines contracts, he said his government would give contracts to the eligible only. He made it clear that the State's interests were paramount than others.

Mr. Revanth Reddy said the day was significant as it marked the death anniversary of former Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao, and stressed that two leaders who implemented landmark welfare schemes should always be remembered.

He recalled that NTR introduced the ₹2-per-kg rice scheme to see happiness in the eyes of the poor, and said the credit for free power supply lay with former Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy.

Amid interest burden, Telangana's total revenue receipts at 54.38% at end of Q3

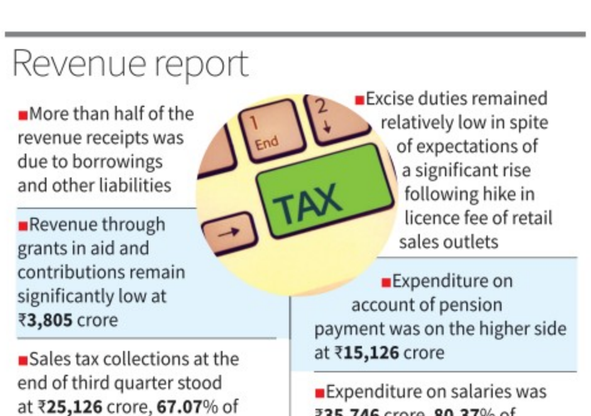
M. Rajeev
HYDERABAD

Telangana continues its efforts to wriggle out of the burden cast by interest payment on the long-term debts, even as it achieved overall revenue receipts of ₹1.24 lakh crore, which was 54.38% of the ₹2.24 lakh crore projected for the financial year in the Budget Estimates.

More than half of the revenue receipts was on account of borrowings and other liabilities which stood at ₹65,930 crore during the period. With just three months left for the end of the fiscal year, the State has a long way to go to achieve the projected revenue receipts. Tax revenue at the end of the third quarter was ₹1.13 lakh crore, 65.02% of the ₹1.75 lakh crore of the budget estimates.

Revenue through grants-in-aid and contributions too remained significantly low at ₹3,805 crore, a meagre 16.7% of the ₹22,782 crore projected for the fiscal. Sales tax collections at the end of the third quarter stood at ₹25,126 crore, which was 67.07% of the projected ₹37,463 crore and the State excise duties fetched ₹17,507 crore – 63.38% of the Budget Estimates of ₹27,623 crore.

Expenditure on account of pension payment was on the higher side at ₹15,126 crore. Expenditure on salaries/wages at the end of the third quarter was ₹35,746 crore, 80.37% of ₹44,478 crore of the Budget Estimates, according to the provisional figures submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.


Revenue report
More than half of the revenue receipts was due to borrowings and other liabilities
Revenue through grants in aid and contributions remain significantly low at ₹3,805 crore
Sales tax collections at the end of third quarter stood at ₹25,126 crore, 67.07% of ₹37,463 crore
Excise duties remained relatively low in spite of expectations of a significant rise following hike in licence fee of retail sales outlets
Expenditure on account of pension payment was on the higher side at ₹15,126 crore
Expenditure on salaries was ₹35,746 crore, 80.37% of ₹44,478 crore of estimates
1 End
2
TAX

No inter-State issue in road accident involving Karnataka van, say police

The Hindu Bureau
MADURAI

The Theni District police have clarified that a video clip pertaining to an "accident" involving a Karnataka-registered van and a truck is being circulated on social media with an "unwarranted divisive narrative". The attempt to portray the isolated incident as an inter-State problem was factually incorrect and misleading, said Theni Superintendent of Police (SP) B. Sneha Priya, in her communication to the SP of Chamrajnagar in Karnataka.

One person has been arrested in connection with the "minor" road accident that occurred on January 12, in which no casualties were reported. "The damage was limited to a minor breakage of the rear light of the van," the letter said, adding that the local police had attended to the incident immediately.

Inspector-General of Police (South Zone), Vijayendra Bidari, addressing the media in Madurai on Sunday. G. MOORTHY

Talking to reporters here on Sunday, Inspector-General of Police, South Zone, Vijayendra Bidari, said a brief verbal altercation had ensued between the drivers of the two vehicles. "Meanwhile, the passengers of the van also got into a heated argument, mainly due to language barrier," he said.

The police intervened promptly and defused the situation, after which both parties dispersed without any further incidents. "The police made the lorry driver pay ₹1,000 to the van operator from Karnataka as compensation for minor damages to resolve the issue amicably on the spot," Ms. Priya said. Since neither party filed a formal complaint, the Allinagaram police, on their own initiative, registered a case and arrested one person on charge of breaching public peace.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka police were trying to trace the persons who had posted the "misleading" social media post, he added. The Theni SP was inquiring into the role and conduct of the police personnel present at the scene of the accident.

Bullying tactics

Trump's weaponisation of tariffs over Greenland could undermine NATO

The Trump administration has vowed to slap a raft of European countries with a 10% tariff on "any and all goods" beginning on February 1 which is then set to increase to 25% on June 1, until an agreement is reached on the U.S. demand to purchase or otherwise acquire the Denmark-administered Arctic territory of Greenland. The latest round of tariffs will add to existing 15% U.S.-imposed trade duties on the countries targeted by the White House, which include Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. While French President Emmanuel Macron described the U.S. action as "unacceptable", U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the move was "completely wrong". The targeted nations have sent a small number of troops to Greenland for what they have called a reconnaissance mission, essentially for military exercises that signal and reinforce Europe's collective commitment to defending the autonomous Arctic territory. Such emphasis by the European Union (EU) clearly reflects concern stemming from the fact that American troops recently entered Venezuela and kidnapped and transported its President Nicolás Maduro to the U.S., and Mr. Trump has since gone on record effectively warning that he might consider intervention – for different purposes and in different circumstances – in Colombia, Cuba, Mexico and Iran next.

Leaving aside the neo-imperialist impulse that is implicit in the Trump administration's plans to control non-allied nations' territories based on the threat of military action, or to bully allies by weaponising tariffs against them, such actions are tantamount to a violation of international law, and in the case of the EU, risk degrading years of progress made on transatlantic trade agreements. First, there is a serious issue of no legislative backing by the U.S. Congress and legal basis for the unilateral action taken by the Trump administration in targeting Denmark and other European countries. Second, the Trump administration is likely to face, this week, a judicial ruling against its use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to impose tariffs across the board. Third, European nations may bring into force what is known as the "anti-coercion instrument", a counter-tariff facility that would limit the trade of major U.S. tech firms and related service providers that conduct significant business in the EU. Whatever the denouement of this Trump-made conflict, it will likely take years, if not decades to heal the worsening transatlantic rift that has beset the region. Meanwhile a weakened NATO will stand less able to assist Ukraine in facing off against the depredations of an aggressive Russia on the eastern front. The need of the hour is enlightened leadership, a far cry from what is presently on offer in Washington.

Crisis in education

Higher education institutions need systemic reforms

In an ongoing case relating to student suicides, the Supreme Court of India has issued nine directions to Central and State governments. Recognising the massification of higher education front-ended by privatisation without a commensurate boost in quality, the Court has taken note of student distress covering financial, social, social injustice and academic issues. The Court has invoked Article 142 of the Constitution and seven of the nine directions relate to record-keeping, reporting, and tracking suicides in higher education institutions (HEI) separately. Two directives order the filling of the posts of Registrars and Vice-Chancellors as well as all vacant faculty positions. Evidently, the Court sees these steps as critical to student well-being.

Across India, ground reportage shows that many public HEIs, especially universities, report 50% vacancies. The University of Madras is a case study as it is the premier State-administered HEI in Tamil Nadu – a State which leads the nation in enrolment in higher education and with a stellar record in women's education. With such a storied legacy, the university was known for quality research besides awarding degrees in affiliated colleges through examinations. Teaching became an important component in the late 1970s, but in the last decade, its decline has been pronounced. No new faculty appointments have been made and the teaching strength is half of the sanctioned strength. The university's research component is just about functional. It boasts of centres for advanced studies such as in philosophy, botany and mathematics, but these are a shadow of their original selves. Today, the humanities, science-based and social science research focused on Tamil Nadu, that the government can leverage from its public universities, has been given short shrift. Vice-Chancellor appointments have been stalled by a recalcitrant Governor. The ambiguity thrown in by the Court on the Presidential reference on a Governor's powers may need to be resolved before Vice-Chancellor vacancies can be quickly filled. Filling faculty positions would have to follow UGC process that takes at least six months and a budgetary commitment that may be helped with Union government support. Availability of qualified faculty can be a hurdle. Corruption and political-ideological appointments have affected quality and need to be addressed. Although the four-month schedule prescribed by the Court might seem daunting, the order is a call to action to fulfil the basic requirements of a robust public higher education system before goals such as Viksit Bharat can be seriously aspired for.

Corruption and prior sanction, case of a divided house

Prashant Bhushan

is an advocate in the Supreme Court of India

Cheryl D'Souza

is an advocate in the Supreme Court of India

On January 13, a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court of India, comprising Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice K.V. Viswanathan, delivered a split verdict on the challenge to the constitutional validity of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, 1988 ("the section"), in *The Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL) vs Union of India*. Both judgments in this case are exhaustive, exemplifying the best tradition of the Court in bestowing the deepest judicial consideration and exercise of judicial conscience to the issues before the Court. The case had challenged the constitutionality of the section that effectively provided that no police officer would conduct any inquiry or investigation into any offence alleged to have been committed by a public servant regarding any recommendation made or decision taken in the discharge of official functions, without the prior sanction of the appropriate government.

The case was mounted on the premise that corruption is anathema to rule of law and vesting the government with the power to stall corruption investigations (where it may have a vested interest) would allow corruption to go uninvestigated and, hence, unchecked.

Arguments of both sides

In this case, the petitioners argued that the amended section was unconstitutional, being in the teeth of two earlier judgments of the Court. When a Single Directive (a consolidated set of instructions issued to the Central Bureau of Investigation, or CBI, by various Ministries/Departments), requiring prior sanction of the designated authority before initiating investigation against certain categories of public servants, was issued, its legality was challenged.

In *Vineet Narain vs Union of India* (1998) 1 SCC 226, the Court had quashed the Single Directive and held that the final opinion whether to investigate or not has to be made by the CBI and not by anyone else. The executive on its own cannot foreclose inquiry into any allegation of corruption as that would be entering the domain of the investigative agency.

The judgment came in the backdrop of the N.N. Vohra Committee (1993) that presented the frightening criminal nexus between highly-placed politicians, high-ranking bureaucrats, and criminal elements. The Court held that equality before the law under Article 14 and the rule of law itself could only be preserved if investigative agencies are insulated from political, executive and bureaucratic interference.

To bypass the judgment in *Vineet Narain*, the central government enacted the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003. Here it introduced Section 6A to the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act (DSPE) Act, effectively reintroducing the Single Directive. A Constitution Bench in *Dr. Subramanian Swamy vs Director, CBI & Anr* (2014) 8 SCC 682 declared Section 6A of the DSPE Act to be unconstitutional on the ground that the classification of officers based on status in government service, for the purpose of investigation was discriminatory and violative of Article 14. It also held that such power to interdict corruption investigations would encourage the criminal-bureaucrat-politician nexus and thwart unbiased and efficient inquiry/investigation to track down corrupt public servants. The Court held: "... the signature tune in *Vineet Narain* is, 'However high you may be, the law is above you' We reiterate the same. Section 6A offends this signature tune and effectively Article 14."

> The split verdict in the CPIL case is about protecting honest public servants while also ensuring an efficient anti-corruption regime

In the CPIL case, the petitioners argued that the Section 17A of the PC Act is distinguishable from Section 6A of the DSPE Act only in the sense that it expands the scope of protection to all levels of public servants and not just to a particular category of public servants (as 6A of the DSPE Act did). The Section does not just ignore the clear findings arrived at by the Court earlier but also chooses to defy the spirit of those findings. It was further argued that the Section runs contrary to the dictum in *Lalita Kumari vs Government of Uttar Pradesh & Ors* (2014) 2 SCC 1, which mandated registration of a first information report and consequent investigation on the disclosure of a cognisable offence.

The government on the other hand defended the constitutionality of the Section and sought to distinguish it from the earlier judgments of the Court on the ground that the Single Directive was struck down as it was merely an administrative order. It added that the Subramaniam Swamy judgment was dealing with a distinction made between officers of Joint Secretary and above versus officers below – both of which did not apply to the present challenge to the constitutionality of the Section.

Where the judges differed

Justice Nagarathna, while upholding the petitioner's contentions, held Section 17A to be contrary to the objects of the Act and unconstitutional as the requirement of prior sanction from the government, she held, "forestalls an enquiry and thereby in substance protects the corrupt". The Section shields a class of public servants and revives an impermissible protection which was previously struck down in *Vineet Narain* and *Subramaniam Swamy*. She also held that there was a conflict of interest between the government (Minister granting sanction) and the officers whose consent for investigation was sought, since they would often be working in the same department with a meeting of minds about decisions taken, amounting to acts of corruption.

Therefore, such a provision was likely to impede investigation into corrupt officers who may, instead, find protection from higher authorities within the same institutional nexus, thereby allowing unchecked corruption. She also held that there would be a policy bias in the officials tasked with granting sanction as they would lack neutrality while considering a request for approval for carrying out an inquiry or investigation into a complaint *vis-à-vis* a decision taken by a public servant in their department.

Justice Viswanathan, while agreeing with Justice Nagarathna and the petitioners that leaving the power of consent with the government would render the provision unconstitutional, found no fault with the provision of prior sanction per se. He held it to be constitutionally valid, subject to the condition that the grant or refusal of approval would rest not with the government but with an independent agency before the decision is taken by the government.

He observed that striking down the Section would lead to a policy paralysis as he felt that honest public servants needed to be insulted from frivolous and mala fide police investigations. He held that the Lokpal, conceived as an independent anti-corruption authority, would deal with such cases in an independent manner, and that its recommendations would be binding on the government as the PC Act and the Lokpal Act operate in the same normative field. "Both address allegations of corruption against public servants, both recognise the need for screening, and both seek to balance accountability with protection against misuse".

At the core

The core disagreement between the two judges is on how to strike a constitutional balance between protecting honest decision-making public servants and ensuring an efficient anti-corruption regime. There is partial agreement between the two judges on the provision being unconstitutional if the power of granting sanction for investigation was left with the government. There remains disagreement on whether prior approval before inquiry or investigation by a police officer is an impermissible barrier (making the Section unconstitutional) or whether having an independent agency such as the Lokpal as a filter to prevent abuse would overcome this barrier (thereby upholding the Section's constitutionality).

Differing from her brother judge, Justice Nagarathna stated, "whether prior approval must be given, was the question, and not who, within or outside the government should give the approval."

The matter has been referred to the Chief Justice of India for constitution of a larger Bench to decide the issue conclusively.

Prashant Bhushan and Cheryl Dsouza were counsels for the petitioners in this case before the Supreme Court of India

India-Germany ties can only soar higher

Philipp Ackermann

is the German Ambassador to India

Last week, we witnessed something rather unusual. Television channels, newspapers and social media were full of images/pictures of two very important leaders – Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz flying kites together in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. It was quite a contrast to the other images of this very substantial meeting. But I actually think that the kite is the perfect symbol to illustrate where Germany's partnership with India is going.

Germany and India have both experienced strong headwinds in recent months. The eroding international trade system is a challenge for both their economies. They both watch the increasing disregard for international law and the disruption of the rules-based global order with great worry. And they both share concerns on the stability in their neighbourhoods. Both countries want predictable conditions. This is what they need for their people to prosper. Based on hard work, on inventiveness and innovation, on education and on science. But it is only in stormy conditions that a good kite flyer shows you what it is capable of – just like the India-German partnership.

Two countries that have economic heft

Chancellor Merz and Mr. Modi are also the leaders of the third- and fourth-biggest economies, respectively, of the world. We are talking about two economic heavyweights. In a few years, India will overtake Germany, to become the undisputed number three in the world. And let me tell you something: Germany will celebrate the day this happens. The world economy is not a zero-sum game, contrary to what some leaders think. When India profits, Germany also profits. A stronger Indian economy means a bigger market for German products, and a stronger footprint of Indian companies in Germany spells more competitive products and services for German businesses and consumers.

> A kite is the apt symbol to show where Germany's partnership with India is going

One of the central messages of Chancellor Merz in India was that a free-trade agreement between Europe and India is what India and Germany need to propel their economies to the next level. And to become more resilient against unpredictable trade wars and supply chain interruptions. This was Chancellor Merz's first visit outside the Western Alliance, and his first time in India. The invitation to Ahmedabad, to Mr. Modi's home State of Gujarat, was a very special gesture of friendship for Germany. There was a lot of substance to discuss and decide upon, but the Chancellor's personal impressions of this trip are just as significant.

The basis of the migration partnership

Here is an anecdote of the visit – it might sound like a small detail, but there is much more to it. Chancellor Merz had a conversation with young Indians who were about to move to Germany. One of these young women had a casual chat with Mr. Merz in German. This young Indian had been learning German for only four months. And I have been struggling with Hindi for four years now. My excuse is usually *"Maf kijie, lekin* Hindi *kafi mushkil hai* (Sorry, but Hindi is very difficult"), but I can tell you that learning German will also feel like a case of brain jogging at times. The chat that Chancellor Merz had with that young lady epitomises what I admire so much about Indians. They are nimble and quick to adapt, they always have a game plan, and they know how to get there – with a mix of perseverance, smartness and sometimes disarming assertiveness. Many well-established professional pathways and educational opportunities around the world are closing up. But Germany continues to welcome smart, skilled and spirited Indians. Its migration partnership with India is built on safe, legal and predictable migration.

Platinum jubilee of ties

In 2026, Germany is celebrating 75 years of diplomatic ties with India and I cannot imagine a better start into this year than this visit. Today, India and Germany stand closer together than ever before. Not just because external shocks brought them closer together, but because in the previous years, they set a clear strategic direction for their partnership. In the same sense, I believe that the diplomatic anniversary between Germany and India will set them up for future success.

A European Union-India-Free Trade Agreement, a closer defence partnership between Germany and India, and stronger and stronger bonds between their people will be the building blocks for something truly lasting.

I am convinced that by the end of this year, when Mr. Modi and his cabinet will travel to Germany for the biennial Intergovernmental Consultations, India and Germany will celebrate a year of significant progress in their bilateral relations, a year that has started with flying their kites in the skies of Ahmedabad.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Real estate' presidency

U.S. President Donald Trump's reported threat to impose escalating tariffs on a set of European nations unless the U.S. is allowed to 'purchase' Greenland reflects a dangerous conflation of trade policy with territorial coercion. What should be economic statecraft is being deployed as leverage against NATO allies, risking retaliation, alliance rupture, and instability in the already contested Arctic. This fits a broader pattern: remarks urging Canada to become the 51st U.S. state, talk of a "world-class" city in war-ravaged Gaza, the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro followed by moves to control the country's oil business, cheerleading Iranian protesters — and now Greenland. Such actions echo a real-estate dealmaker's mindset, not presidential statesmanship. Tariffs, meanwhile, punish American citizens through higher prices. If Congress remains mute, economic bullying may become a substitute for diplomacy.

Gopalaswamy J.,
Chennai

'Lit for Life' 2026

The 2026 edition of the prestigious 'Lit for Life' was a two-day treasure trove literary event — more so for avid readers of this daily and senior citizens like me. The conclaves have been fostering an ecosystem for the forthright exchange of enlightened views on a plethora of topics. For instance, the appeal advocating scientific and data-driven journalism was laudable. Perhaps a book on all the panel discussions can be brought out.

G. Ramasubramanyam,
Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

It was heartening to have the importance of free speech being highlighted. The issue assumes added significance at a time when the bulk of the media has eroded and the so-called intellectual class has become accustomed to singing from the hymn book of the right wing. It is axiomatic that freedoms of thought and expression are indispensable for unlocking innate potential, creativity and originality.

G. David Milton,
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

The prestigious annual literary event should serve as a source of knowledge building. With brilliant minds across the country engaged in conversations on a variety of subjects, the fest has enabled us to nurture our collective love for literature, promote the reading culture, and connect authors with readers.

R. Sivakumar,
Chennai

At Melbourne

Legendary Novak Djokovic is dead right in his line that a Sinner-Alcaraz era is the one looming large over Melbourne. It is time for him to enjoy his game and just try to improve the tally to 25 to create a new world record.

To be frank, it is at the Australian Open, where he owns a record 10 titles, that he has the best chance to rewrite history.

Who knows, he could be lucky enough not to meet either Sinner or Alcaraz during his semi-final clash and even in the finals.

N. Mahadevan,
Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

A display plan for the Piprawaha relics

Nachiket Chanchani

is an Associate Professor in the Department of the History of Art at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, U.S.

After being dispersed for over a century, ancient gems, charged by their proximity to the historical Buddha's corporeal remains, have been reunited with some other extraordinary relics excavated at Piprawaha, Uttar Pradesh. This partial reunification, made possible by an Indian conglomerate's acquisition of the gems from an overseas seller and their handing it over to the government – is being celebrated by an exhibition in Delhi that Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated earlier this month. How they will be housed once the exhibition closes is an urgent question. If these artifacts are carefully displayed – with lessons absorbed from a study of the ancient cult of relics and with an eye to the future – then this restitution has the potential to shift public opinion of India's beleaguered museums, set new standards for safeguarding its composite heritage, and persuade travellers from afar to circumambulate the land of the Buddha.

Understanding the place of Buddhist relics in early India provides insights into how small, visually indistinguishable, and sometimes unattractive objects, were looked after and appreciated. After the Buddha's passing, his followers periodically divided ash, charred bones and other bodily remains among themselves. These remains were placed in vessels, occasionally with gems and other offerings, and eventually interned in the cores of large hemispherical mounds called stupas. A well-preserved stupa at Sanchi can demonstrate how reliquaries conveyed the power of relics, helped people come close to them, and transformed them. Plausibly first constructed in Ashoka's reign, the stupa was elaborated about two centuries later. New gateways built in the four cardinal directions led to a path that wrapped around the mound's circumference. The gateway posts and architraves bore relief carvings of the Buddha's life, worshippers at sacred centres, and royal and auspicious emblems. Taken together, these reliefs prepared viewers to apprehend and properly approach the relics. Figurations of spirits associated with the site acknowledged its long history while depictions of individuals in exotic clothing recognised foreign travellers who were beginning to traverse the trade routes that intersected near Sanchi. Once they were on the pathway that wrapped around the mound, visitors were partially separated from their mundane surroundings by high railings. Once outside the sacred prescient, they found themselves in the company of monastics eager to cultivate friendships.

The success of such strategies to honour and contextualise the Buddha and communicate his teachings can be attested from the support that locales such as Sanchi received from diverse social strata and their rapid growth into major sacred centres replete with many other edifices and institutions. It can also be gleaned from the gradual development of Buddhist enclaves in lands far removed from the landscapes where the historical Buddha lived. For example, in the rock-cut sanctuaries of peninsular India, the Buddha's presence was subtly communicated by monolithic stupas without relics in their cores that were thoughtfully set in spaces laden with sculptures and sometimes frescoes.

A strategy for the future

As little survives of the stupa that originally accommodated the Piprawaha relics, these esteemed artifacts are likely to be moved to a public institution in India after the temporary exhibition in Delhi closes. Merely placing them in sterile vitrines in a museum, as if they are lifeless objects, risks perpetuating the colonial paradigm that privileged seeing relics over their ability to lie concealed and yet energise and empower communities.

Thus, the museum chosen as their new home needs to publicly discuss and sensibly implement long-term plans for them. These plans should include designing spaces that prepare diverse individuals to properly approach the Piprawaha relics, give them opportunities to spend time in proximity to the relics as they wish: chanting mantras, quietly meditating, or contemplating their aesthetics, and thereafter allowing them to see the world anew. New grant and fellowship programmes should also be formulated to encourage art historians to collaborate with anthropologists, scientists, film-makers, and others to explicate how historical artifacts are living entities that shape and reflect their environments. The chosen institution must also start designing courses to acquaint postgraduate students and emerging heritage professionals with the principles and best practices of stewardship, with a focus on restitution and interpretation. As a part of this goal, the institution needs to begin collaborating with colleges across India to convene workshops that empower communities living near heritage sites by engaging them in preventing and combating the illicit traffic in antiquities. Teaching communities how to build datasets of cultural assets, helping them understand how trafficking networks often intersect with organised crime, introducing them to the functioning of India's judicial systems, and inspiring them to advocate for updating legislation so that it is aligned to today's ethical concerns and international agreements are also advisable. Once such spaces are designed and initiatives enacted, we can then proudly say that the Piprawaha relics have truly returned to the land of the Buddha and can be fully empowered by their aura and presence.

> These historical artifacts are living entities and the museum to be their new home needs to think of long-term plans to engage viewers, historians and students

A municipal corporation, a trifurcation

Instead, the Telangana government should focus on the GHMC's core problems

STATE OF PLAY

Swathi Vadlamudi
swathi.v@thehindu.co.in

The year 2025 was a milestone for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), with the expansion of the area under its purview from 650 square kilometres to 2,053 sq.km after the subsumption of 27 peripheral urban local bodies (ULB). The GHMC is now one of India's largest municipal corporations encircled by the 158 km Nehru Outer Ring Road.

Three key ordinances, in late 2025, amending the Telangana Municipalities Act, 2019 and the GHMC Act, 1955, facilitated the GHMC's expansion and the merger of the ULBs which are either within or through which the ORR passed. The ordinances were passed by the Telangana Legislative Assembly during its winter session. The GHMC has now grown from six zones to 12 zones, 30 circles to 60 circles, and 150 wards/divisions to 300 wards/divisions. With the GHMC Council's term set to end by February 11, 2026, new council representatives are to be elected for the 300 wards in fresh elections.

While no official announcement has been made yet, there is talk that the civic body could be divided into three different corporations – Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Malkajgiri. There has been a hurried appointment of additional commissioners in the Cyberabad and Malkajgiri regions, a devolution of powers as well as the reorganisation of the town planning and engineering departments.

Hyderabad is likely to become the largest of all three corporations (150 wards/divisions). Official sources confirm that it would comprise the zones within the core city and the appended regions towards the airport (Rajendra Nagar, Jalpally, Adibatla and Shamshabad). Revenues could be stagnant in the core city with scope for development in the newly added zones remaining limited due to height restrictions around the airport. Cyberabad would encompass all the localities on the western side, which have developed well due to the existence of information-technology and related industries. They include Kokapet, Raidurgam, Serilingampally, Kukatpally, Patancheru, Dundigal, Shamirpet and Medchal. Here, gigantic towers and rising realty prices, rather than road space, water availability and quality of life, seem to attract NRI investments.

Malkajgiri, the 'third corporation to be', largely constitutes the eastern part of the city, home to retired government and private employees, middle- and lower-income groups, and migrant populations. This area still faces issues related to semi-urban settings and poor infrastructure. There is also a 350-acre city garbage dump which limits the scope for development in 5-6 kilometre radius.

The demerger of the GHMC into three separate corporations thus negates the goal mentioned in the merger order 'to tackle uneven growth, service disparities, and fragmented governance in rapidly urbanizing areas...'

The Hyderabad Corporation would in all probability be dominated by the AIMIM, which is poised to increase its tally from 44 to 70-80 seats in a 150-ward council, after the recent ward delimitation exercise. The hard fact is that the AIMIM, with its unrivalled grip on the heritage part of the city for decades, historically displayed no progressive ethos or developmental vision. Its dominance could affect the growth dynamics and cosmopolitan quality of the corporation, with parochial concerns overpowering the larger goals.

The political motive behind all this is undefined, but the Congress party's voter base could expand. During the 2023 legislative elections, all the city-based Assembly constituencies other than those from the Old City were bagged by the Bharat Rashtra Samithi; the demerger could aid the Congress. There are some who believe that the demerger is to aid Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's pet project, Bharat Future City, about 60 km away from the administrative centre of the State.

The government could learn a lesson or two from the Delhi experiment of 2012 when Delhi was split into three corporations with a stated goal of better civic management. It was hit by financial strain and operational inefficiencies, and the corporations had to be re-unified a decade later. The Telangana government could focus on the deficiencies that plague the GHMC , such as development disparities, woeful staffing, rampant corruption, lack of planning and innovation in urban infrastructure, and unreliable public transport, rather than losing a decade to learn the hard way.

Telangana's stunning rise and its unhinged growth

However, data on this achievement point to the need for policies to be formulated to spread the fruits of growth across the State

DATA POINT

R. Nagaraj and Vikash Vaibhav

Telangana is the richest among major Indian States, with highest per capita income. In 2022-23, the latest year for which data for all States are available, the figure for Telangana stood at ₹3.54 lakh (at current prices).

For Karnataka it was ₹3.44 lakh, Haryana ₹3.24 lakh, Gujarat ₹3.1 lakh, Tamil Nadu ₹3.09 lakh, Kerala ₹2.9 lakh and Maharashtra ₹2.89 lakh.

This is an impressive achievement as these States were ranked higher in 2013-14, at the time of Telangana's formation in June 2014. Using Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and District Domestic Product (DDP) data, the State's performance can be assessed in terms of regional concentration and sectoral spread. These two issues were quite central to the demand for a separate State of Telangana. Neighbouring Andhra Pradesh serves as the comparator for this purpose.

Economic size of Telangana

In 2004-05, Telangana's economic size was about three-fourths of Andhra Pradesh (74%). The gap became almost negligible at the time of the bifurcation (96% in 2013-14). Since then, the State's relative size has remained stable (96.5% in 2024-25). The same holds in per capita terms as well (**Chart 1**). Telangana's per capita income was slightly higher than Andhra Pradesh's in 2004-05 (6%). It steadily rose to 1.3 times by 2013-14, and remained constant since then (1.35 times in 2024-25).

Sectoral composition: At a sectoral level, the relative decline of the agricultural and industrial (and manufacturing) sectors in Telangana has been faster than the national average. The services sector was about 1.25 times that of Andhra Pradesh in 2013-14. This has steadily climbed to 1.47 by 2024-25 (**Chart 2**)

Components of the services sector: Which part of the services sector has driven this? 'Real estate, ownership of dwelling, and Business service' (Real estate and IT) and 'Trade, Hotel, and Restaurants' (THR). Compared to Andhra Pradesh, the former sector jumped from 2 times to 2.7 times during 2013-14 and 2024-25 (**Chart 3**). This performance is closely matched by the second sub-sector. Due to this impressive performance, these two sub-sectors constitute about two-thirds of the services sector output in 2024-25 in Telangana: real estate and IT (35.3%), and THR (29.6%).

What about the geography of economic growth? Undivided Andhra Pradesh had 23 districts of which 10 were carved out to form Telangana. Soon after, in October 2016, Telangana was divided into 21 new districts, with two more formed in 2019. Hyderabad was the only district left undivided.

To gain a perspective, we track the output shares of the original 10 districts since 2004-05. For clarity, the illustration shows only two leading districts: Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy (RR). None of the other eight districts ever contributed more than a tenth of the economy of the State since its creation. In 2022-23, the range was between 4.4% (Nizamabad) and 8.9% (Medak).

The dominance of Metro Hyderabad: Hyderabad, along with its neighbouring RR district, is the State's economically dominant region (**Chart 4**). These two districts (Metropolitan Hyderabad) account for about half of the State's economy (47.5% in 2022-23). They cover less than a tenth of its area (8.7%), and are home to slightly over a fourth of its people (27.9% based on the 2011 Census). Metro Hyderabad's economic share has remained roughly stable over the last decade.

The rise of Ranga Reddy district: RR district was carved out of Hyderabad in 1978, comprising mostly of its rural areas.

In its original creation, it surrounded Hyderabad from all sides. In 2016, as part of a State-wide strategy, RR district was subdivided into three districts. The smaller RR district covered Hyderabad from the south, Medchal-Malkajgiri from the north while the western part became Vikarabad, with Metro Hyderabad as a contagious area.

In 2014, RR district overtook Hyderabad in the metro region to become the economically leading district, mainly due to the booming IT sector. It is a historical irony that RR district (then an undivided district) was one of India's 250 most backward districts (out of 640) in 2006. It is now one of India's richest districts, with a per capita income of ₹ 9.5 lakh in 2023-24.

On the flip side, Vikarabad (which was part of RR district until 2019), has now the State's lowest per capita income (₹1.8 lakh).

Telangana's engine

Telangana's rise is stunning. Metro Hyderabad is its engine, contributing nearly one-half of the State's output, driven by two sub-sectors, namely, real estate-IT, and trade, hotel, and restaurants. However, the engine is unhinged from the rest of the State, with its neighbouring district,

Vikarabad, for instance, is lagging, with just 1.5 % of Telangana's output. In a deepening democracy, such an extremely uneven growth process can lead to social and political backlash, given the State's long history of people's movements and violent struggles. The situation calls for policies to spread the fruits of growth across the State to redress severe spatial imbalances.

R. Nagaraj was formerly with the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research. Vikash Vaibhav teaches at the School of Liberal Arts and Humanities, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat

Concentrated growth

The data for the charts were sourced from the Economic & Political Weekly Research Foundation and Dataful

CHART 1: Telangana's GSDP and per capita income (pcGSDP) as a percentage of Andhra Pradesh (in constant prices)

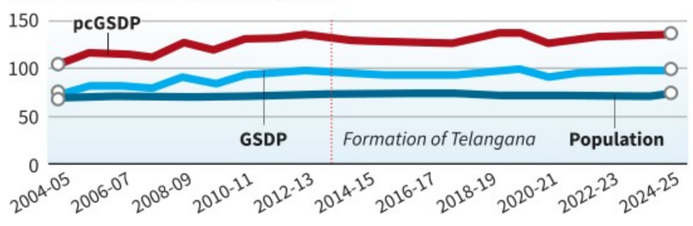


CHART 2: Sectoral performance of Telangana as a percentage of Andhra Pradesh (in constant prices)

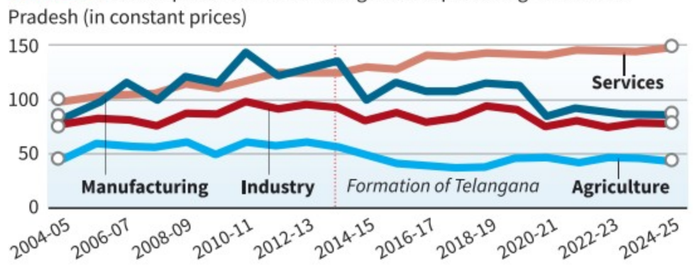


CHART 3: Two major components of Telangana's services sector as a percentage of Andhra Pradesh (in constant prices)

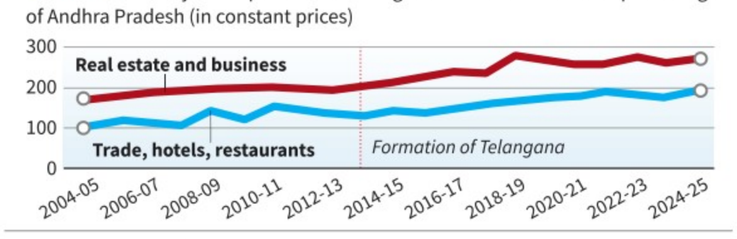
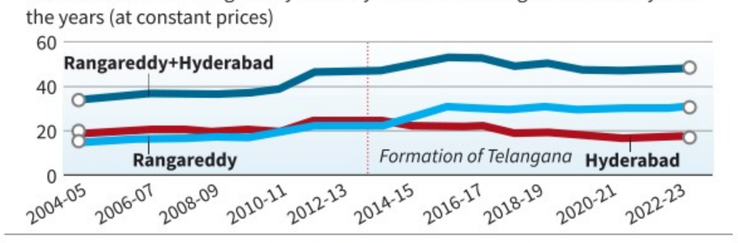


CHART 4: Share of Rangareddy's and Hyderabad in Telangana's economy over the years (at constant prices)



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 19, 1976

Library as a Public Movement: Jatti's Call

NEW DELHI, Jan. 18.

The Vice-President, Mr. B.D. Jatti yesterday called for turning the library movement into a public movement to serve the public need in the true sense. Mr. Jatti, who was inaugurating the 22nd All-India Library Conference here, said "while the library movement has doubtless benefited and drawn strength from the Indian Library Association, it has been recognised that this should be a public movement in which there is large participation by lay persons who do not belong to the library profession. Only then it is felt, the movement will serve the public need in the true sense."

Mr. Jatti said it was difficult for people to keep their knowledge and information current and valid but it was essential for efficient, successful and happy existence in modern society. Mr. Jatti said: "It is important that a librarian should be a person dedicated to the task of serving the public through his library and he must possess the requisite technical qualification for his job."

The President of the Indian Library Association, Mr. D.R. Kalia, who presided, said participation in and contribution by the illiterate mass of the country to the national development was crucial.

"The illiterate mass of the Indian population is no doubt culturally advanced and has the traditional wisdom, but it is ill-equipped for a technological society which we are striving to create," he said.

Mr. Kalia regretted that primary schools all over the country were completely devoid of library facilities, though it was the most appropriate stage of education for initiating the reading habit. It was no wonder that they were finding it extremely difficult to raise the quality of school education in this situation. – PTI.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 19, 1926

Government Presses, Madras

There is a proposal to appoint a Committee to consider the question of remodelling the Penitentiary, Madras, so that the printing work now done in the Government Presses in the Mint Street and on the Mount Road and in the Penitentiary may be done in one building. It is anticipated that as a result of the scheme the cost of establishment would be reduced, and overlapping of work would be avoided and a satisfactory condition of things would be secured.

From Page One

₹6,957-crore Kaziranga corridor work launched

The Prime Minister said that election results across States – including in Kerala's capital Thiruvananthapuram, where the BJP secured the Mayor's post for the first time – reflected a consistent national trend. "The voters today want good governance and development. That is why they like the BJP," he said.

Mumbai's faith in BJP

The country has shown a growing faith and trust in the BJP in recent months, Mr. Modi said. "In the Bihar election, even after 20 years, people helped the BJP win a record number of seats. The results of the Maharashtra Municipal Corporation election were announced two days ago. For the first time, Mumbai gave the BJP a record mandate. People allowed the BJP to serve them in most other cities of Maharashtra," he said.

'Repeated rejection'

"The results have also shown that the voters are repeatedly rejecting the negative politics of Congress," he added. He asserted that the Congress has lost the country's trust due to its lack of a development agenda. "Congress took the fourth or fifth spot in Mumbai, where it was born. It has shrunk significantly in Maharashtra, which it has ruled for years," Mr. Modi pointed out.

India invited to join Gaza peace board

New Delhi has not yet responded to the invitation, officials say; the Board of Peace, to be headed by Trump and to include 'other members and heads of state', is expected to oversee funding for the 'redevelopment of Gaza' until the Palestinian Authority completes a 'reform programme'

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

United States President Donald Trump has invited India to be a part of the Board of Peace for Gaza, sources in New Delhi said on Sunday.

U.S. Ambassador Sergio Gor also shared a letter on social media from Mr. Trump to Prime Minister Narendra Modi inviting India.

The Board of Peace for Gaza comprises a group of countries that are being invited by the U.S. to provide a governance structure for the Gaza Strip, as Hamas is being pressured to give up its governance role in the territory as part of Mr. Trump's peace plan.

Officials unwilling to be named said that India has the "invite in hand", though New Delhi has not responded as yet. This comes three days after Mr. Trump announced on social media that the Board of Peace had been formed and that its members would be announced "shortly".

The Trump peace plan for Gaza was first floated on September 29, 2025, when the U.S. President hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House. Following the announcement, Hamas agreed to return all 48 remaining hostages who were being held in Gaza in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and Gaza detainees.

As per the plan, Gaza will be administered by the "temporary transitional governance of a technocratic apolitical Palestinian committee", which will consist of Palestinian and international experts. This transitional outfit will be supervised by the Board of Peace, to be headed by Mr. Trump and include "other members and heads of state", as well as the United Kingdom's former Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.S. President Donald Trump with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Oval Office of the White House on February 13, 2025. AFP

The Board of Peace is expected to handle funding for the "redevelopment of Gaza" till the Palestinian Authority has completed a "reform programme".

The U.S. is expected to work with international partners to develop a "temporary" International Stabilisation Force (ISF) to be deployed in Gaza soon. The U.S. has been in talks with multiple countries across the world for troops to participate in the ISF.

Officials here have maintained that India would not be part of the ISF as it is not a peacekeeping force under the aegis of the United Nations.

On October 9, 2025, however, Mr. Modi had welcomed the Trump peace plan in a post on X.

"We welcome the agreement on the first phase of President Trump's peace plan. This is also a reflection of the strong leadership of PM Netanyahu," he said.

Jordan, Greece, Cyprus, and Pakistan also said on Sunday they had received invitations.
(With PTI inputs)

UAE President arrives today

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India will host UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, on Monday.

The UAE President will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The visit will provide an opportunity for the two leaders to chart new frontiers for the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. It will also enable exchange of views on regional and global issues of mutual interest, where India and the UAE share a high degree of convergence," the External Affairs Ministry said.

As long as Trinamool is in power, investment won't come to Bengal, says Modi

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Supporters gather to see Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public meeting, at Singur, West Bengal , on Sunday. PTI

Accusing the Trinamool Congress of imposing a "syndicate tax" on all development in the State, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said investment and business would not come to West Bengal as long as the Trinamool Congress government remained in power.

"Industries will only be set up and investment will come to West Bengal when the law and order situation improves. But in West Bengal, rioters and mafia have a free run. The police are hand in glove with criminals. You know that there is a syndicate tax on all development," the Prime Minister said at a public meeting in Singur.

There was much enthusiasm among the BJP's rank and file over the Prime Minister's public meeting at Singur as the place had become synonymous with the flight of capital from the State. Tata Motors had decided to pull out their small car factory from Singur during the regime of the Left Front government in 2008, due to protest against forcible land acquisition, which was led by Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee.

Mr. Modi, however, did not touch on the development that had rocked the politics of the State almost 18 years ago or promised any fresh investment at Singur. In a government event earlier in the day, Mr. Modi announced development projects worth over ₹830 crore in the State and flagged Amrit Bharat trains connecting Kolkata with other parts of the country.

At the public meeting, the Prime Minister emphasised on "*asol poriborton* [real change]" and repeated the slogan "*Paltano Dorkaar, Chai BJP Sorkaar* [Need change, want BJP government]", which he had coined at a public meeting at Malda on Saturday. "It is necessary that the *maha-jungleraaj* of the TMC goes away from West Bengal," he said.

'Security in jeopardy'

Mr. Modi accused the Trinamool of "playing with national security by aiding infiltrators". "The TMC is playing with national security. They sit on dharnas to protect infiltrators. The TMC is fond of infiltrators as they are their committed vote bank. It can go to any extent to protect infiltrators," he claimed.

Addressing a public meeting in Malda on Saturday, the Prime Minister had emphasised on "illegal infiltration" and said it was changing the demography of the State.

Mr. Modi touched on the issue of border fencing and said the Trinamool government was not providing land to erect fencing along the border. "For the last several years, the Centre has been writing to the TMC government seeking land for border fencing, but the State dispensation did nothing," he said.

The Trinamool reacted sharply to the comments. "Singur doesn't take kindly to liars. This is the land that buried corporate land-grab politics. So when PM stood in Singur today and claimed that no investments are coming to Bengal, he wasn't just distorting facts, he was insulting the intelligence of Bengal's people," the party said in a social media post.

8 Opposition leaders booked as row over Manikarnika Ghat intensifies

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

A war of words erupted on Sunday between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Opposition parties after multiple first information reports (FIRs) were lodged in Varanasi against those allegedly spreading AI-generated images and misleading information on social media regarding redevelopment work at the Manikarnika Ghat. While Opposition parties expressed outrage over the registered cases, calling them dictatorial, the BJP hit back, alleging a calculated attempt to circulate false claims amid the government's rejuvenation push.

The eight booked individuals include Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, Lok Sabha MP Rajesh Ranjan, alias Pappu Yadav, and Congress leader Jaswinder Kaur. The FIRs have been lodged under Section 196 (promoting enmity, hatred, or disharmony between different groups through speech, writing, signs, or electronic means) and Section 298 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. Reacting to the FIR against him, Mr. Singh alleged that the redevelopment work had caused destruction at Manikarnika Ghat. Temples were damaged and a statue of Ahilyabai Holkar was defaced, drawing protests from *sadhus* and others, he alleged.

Old structures being demolished for the renovation and revamp of Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi. ANI VIDEO GRAB

Earlier, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday accused the Congress of spreading "false propaganda" to defame Kashi. Mr. Adityanath was responding to allegations regarding the demolition of statues and temples at Manikarnika Ghat and viral videos related to it.

Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Rai said that if the videos were AI-generated, concrete evidence should be made public, and described the cases as reflective of a dictatorial attitude. "I ask the Chief Minister directly: If the video of the statue is AI-generated, concrete evidence of this should be made public. It should also be clarified where the statue went and where it is currently located," Mr. Rai said.

How long will the Modi govt. live in denial, asks Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Citing a World Bank report on air pollution that claimed around one million premature deaths happen annually in the Indo-Gangetic and the Himalayan foothills, the Congress on Sunday asked how long the Narendra Modi government would continue to remain in "denial" over a deepening public health crisis.

Referring to the World Bank's latest report, "A Breath of Change", Congress general secretary (communications) and former Union Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said the findings were comprehensive, evidence-based and unambiguous.

The report estimates that air pollution in the Indo-Gangetic Plains and the Himalayan foothills is responsible for around one million premature deaths every year, while causing economic losses amounting to nearly 10% of the region's gross domestic product annually.

In a post on X, Mr. Ramesh said the report underscored the scale and urgency of the crisis, noting that nearly one billion people in the region were exposed to hazardous air on a daily basis. Stressing the need for "tougher and uncompromising" enforcement of pollution norms , Mr. Ramesh asked, "How long will the Modi government live in denial?"

Govt. is proud of Indian companies investing abroad: Commerce Minister

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The government is proud of the high and growing amounts of investment Indian companies are making outside the country, and is actively encouraging these companies to make acquisitions and investment abroad, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said.

The statement comes at a time when the latest data shows that outward direct investment by Indian companies grew nearly 46% to $20.5 billion in the April-October 2025 period.

"We are proud of it, we are encouraging it," Mr. Goyal told *The Hindu* in response to a query on Friday. "No country has been successful or has become a developed country by being inward looking. You have to be bold and look at going across continents, and expand the frontiers of your own business."

The commerce minister said the government "strongly encourages" Indian businesses to invest abroad and has made regulatory changes to further enable this. "We have relaxed a lot of rules to encourage them to acquire companies world-wide and to set up manufacturing facilities world-wide, and to provide services worldwide," Mr. Goyal said.

According to the Reserve Bank of India, the key destinations for outward FDI from India were Singapore, followed by the U.S. and the U.A.E., which together accounted for more than half of total outward FDI.

The central bank added that around 90% of the outward FDI was in financial, insurance, and business services.

Rahul Gandhi to attend MGNREGA protest

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, will attend a MGNREGA Chaupal in Rae Bareli on January 20 as part of the Congress's nationwide MGNREGA Bachao Sangram, party general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said on Sunday .

An online review meeting of Pradesh Congress Committee presidents and party functionaries resolved to intensify panchayat-level outreach.

Fill vacant faculty positions within 4 months: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has observed that "massification" and "privatisation" of higher education have placed India second globally in student enrolment, but the rush has left behind a trail of deaths, distress, chronic vacancies, and exploitation.

Invoking the court's plenary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution, a Bench of Justice J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan, in a 38-page order, issued a series of directions, including that vacant faculty positions in both public and private higher education institutions (HEIs) must be filled within four months. Appointments of Vice-Chancellors and Registrars must be made within a month of the posts falling vacant, as a matter of practice.

The backlog of pending scholarship disbursements must be cleared within a period of four months by the relevant Central and State government authorities.

It said the number of incidents of students crumpling under pressure to take their own lives has reached "epidemic" proportions even as the National Education Policy, 2020 had set an ambitious target of achieving a 50% Gross Enrolment Ratio by the year 2035.

SC says the student suicide rate has reached 'epidemic' proportions . FILE PHOTO

Purely quantitative expansion without any adequate institutional support framework has left students vulnerable, as directly evidenced by the recurring instances of campus tragedies, the court noted.

Students who interacted with a Supreme Court-appointed National Task Force (NTF) during a survey shared that "extremely rigid attendance policies, overburdening and unplanned phasing/scheduling of the academic curriculum, exam assessment methodologies, faculty shortage, non-transparent or non-existent placement processes" were stressors affecting their mental health.

Medical students spoke about exploitative academic culture coupled with on-call hours being stretched well beyond the prescribed limit - going as far as 36 to 48 hours in one go.

"HEIs cannot shirk away from their fundamental duty to ensure that their institutions as a whole are safe, equitable, inclusive and conducive spaces of learning," the court observed.

Lack of medical help

The NTF found that around 65% of the institutes currently did not provide access to mental health service providers. The court directed that residential HEIs must provide access to round-the-clock qualified medical help, if not on campus, then within a one-km radius to provide emergency health support to students.

The court ordered that the 'Sample Registration System' data on suicides, especially those falling within the age group of 15-29 years, must be centrally maintained.

Media bodies seek new chairperson for Press Council of India

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Media associations on Sunday urged the government to appoint a new chairperson for the Press Council of India as the post fell vacant after Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai completed her tenure last month.

The Press Council of India, a statutory, quasi-judicial body to safeguard press freedom, has been without a chairperson for the first time in its history, the Press Association and journalists' bodies of Mumbai, Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, and Chandigarh-Punjab said in a joint statement in New Delhi.

"The term of the 14th Council ended more than a year ago, but the full 15th Council is yet to be formed, and the post of chairman has not been filled, while the last chairman's three-year extended term ended in December," the statement said.

The Press Council of India comprises 29 members, including the chairperson, with a tenure of three years. Currently, 14 people have been appointed to the council.

INBRIEF

Terrorists engaged in firing, troops deployed in Kishtwar

Additional troops were rushed to a hilly region of Kishtwar after a group of terrorists was spotted and engaged in firing on Sunday. Perched around 3,670 metres above sea level, terrorists were spotted at Son Nar, northeast of Chhatru, Kishtwar, the Army said. Official sources said around three terrorists were suspected to be at the encounter site. A contact was established with terrorists in Son Nar during a deliberate search operation conducted as part of ongoing joint counter-terror operations along with the J&K Police, the Army said. The Army named the ongoing operation "Operation Trashi". Operations remain under way with additional forces sent to reinforce the cordon.

Two children die due to GBS in M.P.'s Neemuch district

Authorities have swung into action after the death of two children due to the Gullian-Barré Syndrome (GBS), an immunological nerve disorder, in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch district and detection of 18 cases over the past few days, officials said on Sunday. Manasa sub-divisional magistrate Kiran Anjana told *The Hindu* that a special ward had been established at the Civil Hospital for new patients and existing patients had been referred to bigger hospitals.

'Borders should not be decided by tanks or terrorists, but through negotiations'

Polish Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister says his country is 'pleased' with India's reduction in Russian oil purchases; hopes New Delhi shares the view that a world in which the 'law of the jungle becomes acceptable is not a good world'; he expresses optimism for an EU-India FTA soon

INTERVIEW

Radoslaw Sikorski

Suhasini Haidar
JAIPUR

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Borders should not be decided by "tanks or terrorists", the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Poland, Radoslaw Sikorski, said ahead of his meeting with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Monday. Mr. Sikorski, hoping that India and Poland could have a closer understanding on the issue of Russia's war in Ukraine, said that Poland is "pleased" India has begun reducing its dependence on Russian oil, four years after the war in Ukraine began. The Polish Foreign Minister, one of a number of high-level visitors from Europe to India this month, said the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is still being negotiated, but he hoped it would be signed at the EU-India summit on January 27. Edited excerpts:

You have referred to India's cut in buying Russian oil and said you are 'pleased' and 'satisfied' – are you convinced that this is a permanent shift, or are these just market adjustments?

Well, Russia lost its most lucrative market for gas and oil in Europe as a result of its aggression against one of its neighbours (Ukraine). We hope India understands our pain, in the sense that we were both colonised in the 19th century; Poland was, so was Ukraine. And we, I think both [India and Poland] believe that the time of European empires trying to colonise other people should be over, and I think both of our regions appreciate how transitory and sometimes accidental borders are, but we also believe that they should be decided through negotiation and adjudication, and not by sending tanks or terrorists.

Do you think the Indian government is shifting its position due to what Poland has been saying?

Well, India is such a huge country that we understand that it needs to have relationships with everyone. But we hope that India shares our view that principles still matter, that a world in which the law of the jungle becomes acceptable is not a good world. I understand that importers always want a bargain, and Russia is forced to sell its oil at a huge discount, and it's sometimes tempting to take advantage of that, but countries should be careful, because we have successfully sanctioned the Russian "shadow fleet". And so, even when Russia sells [crude oil], they might not be able to deliver it.

Is there any sign of a Russia-Ukraine ceasefire? Poland has been seen as anti-ceasefire, given its transfer of weapons and fighter aircraft...

That's not anti-ceasefire. That's just helping the victim of aggression resist the aggressor. Doing nothing means that the aggressor wins. And yes, the war can be over as soon as Mr. Putin decides to stop.

Is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as united, given the U.S. threats against Greenland?

We have had a war within NATO before, when Turkiye landed its paratroopers in Cyprus (the Turkish invasion in 1974). We survived it, and we'll survive this one, too.

Do you expect to see the EU-India FTA being signed next week?

I hope so. There are, of course, both benefits and some sectoral difficulties where we need to be sensitive to each other's pain. But overall, I think President Donald Trump deserves credit for encouraging us to sign, first, the agreement with Latin America (the EU-Mercosur FTA) and now with India [reference to tariffs].

You said there are certain sensitivities that still have to be dealt with – in particular, agricultural market access is believed to have been kept out of the deal. Would Poland support that?

The negotiations are continuing, and we are talking about thousands of products, so it's complicated, and let's leave that to the experts. Since communism collapsed in Poland, when the iconic picture from Poland was of food queues, we are now a huge food exporter. I believe that there are very few product lines in which [India and Poland's] agriculture competes with one another. Together, [India and EU] are two billion people. So there is a great deal of potential. And you have a political system which is more compatible with us than some others. So we have hope [of a deal].

(Read the full interview here: newsth.live/sikorski)

Budget an opportunity to fine-tune crypto policy, say industry players

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Cryptocurrencies currently attract a 1% Tax Deducted at Source on every transaction, and a 30% tax on any profit made. REUTERS

India's top cryptocurrency players say that a few policy tweaks in the upcoming Budget 2026 could go a long way in ensuring capital does not flow out of the country and instead thrives within the country without sacrificing on regulatory requirements such as KYC norms and anti-money laundering provisions.

Cryptocurrencies – or Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs), as the government calls them – currently attract a 1% Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) on every transaction, and a 30% tax on any profit made, without the option of setting off losses first.

That is, the 30% tax applies to any profits made on any crypto transactions, without the option of allowing the user to balance these profits against losses made on other crypto transactions.

These tax measures, crypto industry players say, are restrictive and are encouraging crypto investors to invest in foreign exchanges rather than Indian ones.

"As India prepares for Budget 2026, there is a clear opportunity to fine-tune a framework which supports transparency and compliance while fostering innovation," Nischal Shetty, Founder of WazirX, said. "A calibrated reduction in transaction-level TDS and a review of loss set-off provisions could help restore onshore liquidity, improve compliance, and ensure that more economic activity remains within India's regulated perimeter, without compromising oversight or enforcement," he added.

Raj Karkara, chief operating officer at ZebPay, also called for the review of the 30% tax and the 1% TDS, and said that the need was to bring the tax treatment of cryptos in line with other asset classes as a means to ensure more money remains in India.

"From a taxation standpoint, a rationalisation of the current 1% TDS on crypto transactions could meaningfully improve liquidity and encourage stronger onshore participation, while a review of the flat 30% tax on VDA gains, aligned with other asset classes and allowing for loss set-offs, would create a more balanced and predictable investment environment.

A previous analysis by *The Hindu* of the government's TDS data had found that the value of crypto transactions in India had crossed ₹50,000 crore in 2024-25, up from ₹36,270 crore in 2023-24 and ₹22,130 crore in 2022-23.

"The Budget presents an opportunity to strengthen the VDA ecosystem through tax refinements that protect users, maintain financial stability, and support responsible market development," SB Seker, head of APAC for Binance, said.

India's power distribution utilities post ₹2,701 cr. profit in FY 2024-25

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Officials express confidence that the Electricity Amendment Bill (2026) would help spur the trend toward profitability. FILE PHOTO

Reversing several years of losses since unbundling and corporatisation of State electricity Boards, India's power distribution utilities – namely, distribution companies (discoms) and power departments – posted a net profit or positive profit after tax (PAT), primarily led by State-run discoms trimming their losses by approximately 80% from FY 2023 to FY 2025, a senior official in the Power Ministry told *The Hindu*.

"One of the main reasons behind this [the overall industry being in net profits] is that the State discoms' after-tax losses have come down sharply in these three years, by about 80%," they stated.

In the financial year 2024-25, India's power distribution utilities collectively posted a net profit of ₹2,701 crore, the Ministry informed on Sunday. For comparable context, the utilities combined had incurred a loss of ₹67,692 crore in FY 2013-14 and had trimmed them to ₹25,553 crore in FY 2023-24.

Officials also expressed confidence that the Electricity Amendment Bill (2026), set to be tabled in Parliament during this Budget Session, would further help spur the trend toward profitability.

Reflecting on the development, Union Minister for Power Manohar Lal, stated, "This marks a new chapter for the distribution sector and is a result of several steps that have been taken to redress the concerns of the distribution sector."

He further held that distribution utilities have also accrued an improved show across all performance indicators. The Aggregate Technical and Commercial losses, an indicator of losses because of technical inefficiencies, theft, billing inefficiencies, and commercial losses combined, have reduced to 15.04% in FY 2024-25 from 22.62% in FY 2013-14.

Additionally, the difference between the average cost of supply and the average revenue realised (ACS-ARR) has also narrowed from ₹0.78/kilowatt-hour (FY 2013-14) to ₹0.06/kilowatt-hour (FY 2024-25). A lower cost-revenue gap indicates lower operating loss for discoms with increased ability to recoup their costs.

Further, the Ministry stated that the Electricity (Late Payment Surcharge) Rules have contributed to a 96% reduction in outstanding dues to generating companies. It has come down to ₹4,927 crore until January this year from approximately ₹1.35 lakh crore in 2022.

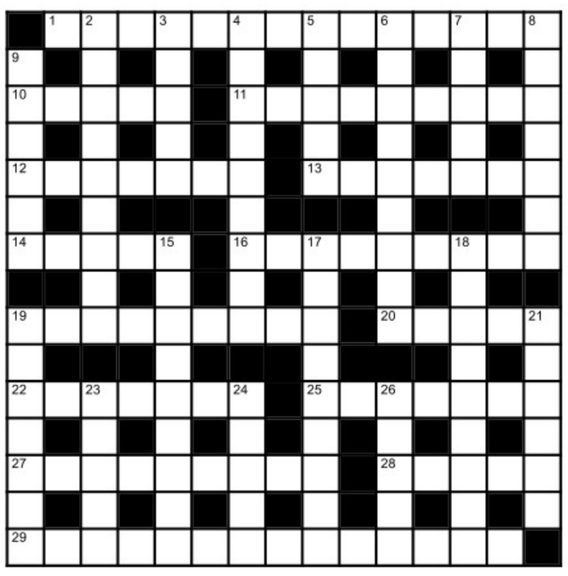
The rules have also brought down distribution utility payment cycles, in other words, billing and payment schedules, to 113 days in FY 2024-25 from 178 days in FY 2020-21.

TH CROSSWORD + 14694

(set by Arden)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at *https://crossword.thehindu.com*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 The average Joe somehow entertains them (3,2,3,6)
10 He owns stock like in the middle of the sea, mostly (5)
11 SOS once briefly for getting amorous here at the centre (9)
12 Long to get into coach, not in one of the airways (7)
13 Harry liaises to get some lining material (7)
14 Money is repatriated from Iran, I'd say (5)
16 Instrument protected in the middle of winter is undamaged (9)
19 Strangely I'm told, even beards become grey for these people (3-6)
20 French Nobel laureate backed Bush (5)
22 Japanese hostesses sent out — sent out of housing estates, perhaps (7)
25 Snake becomes Greek lover as adjoining characters swap first place (7)
27 Thing to change before midnight — have some cover for retirement (9)
28 Some of the original image reflected in the fashion capital (5)
29 Fancy coat originates from classification (14)

Down

2 Sat on the fence on a plot filled with soil (9)
3 Subject of a cycling holy man in India (5)
4 Accept a raise and go away (4,1,4)
5 Reduces like in rear view (5)
6 Twitter is overactive — that amounts to a lot (9)
7 Regularly held — agrees on margins (5)
8 Stoop shows mistake in time card (7)
9 Displayed emotion over book and encouraged both sides (6)
15 Get chairs arranged for a parliamentary building (9)
17 Checks the way people get into habits (9)
18 Moving drama on sick, old animal... (9)
19 ...only about caring for the living (7)
21 My leaders only need another crown (6)
23 Block ready to be rolled — informing others (5)
24 Small dog has nothing to eat, needs a scrub (5)
26 Own admission in verbatim — daily reviewed (5)

SUDOKU

8				4		9		
		3			2			
	7				3		4	8
9					8	6	1	
				7				
	3	7	5					9
3	9		2				6	
			9			4		
		2		8				1

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

1	4	7	5	2	6	3	8	9
5	8	3	9	4	1	6	2	7
6	2	9	3	8	7	4	5	1
7	3	6	8	9	5	1	4	2
9	5	4	1	6	2	7	3	8
8	1	2	7	3	4	9	6	5
4	7	1	6	5	8	2	9	3
3	6	5	2	7	9	8	1	4
2	9	8	4	1	3	5	7	6

FAITH

Bare necessities of life

What are the bare necessities of life? Many of us list luxuries as necessities, because we are so accustomed to enjoying such luxuries. But the basic necessities of food, water, clothing and shelter are enough, and anything more is unnecessary, points out Srimad Bhagavatam. And even with regard to these, the purana advocates the barest minimum as enough for survival, said Valayapet Ramachariar in a discourse.

Suka advises Pareekshit on how a person desirous of moksha should live. Does a person need a cot and a mattress to sleep on? Can he not lie on the ground? As for shelter, have trees stopped sheltering people? Are caves no longer available? Can we not just take some river water in our hand and drink from the palm of the hand? Do we need vessels to hold water? When Nature gives us so much and charges us nothing for them, what is the need to flatter the rich and powerful? Should we indulge in such *nara stuthi*? Once we realise the insignificance of our possessions, we must turn our attention to Lord Narayana, the Supreme One and meditate on Him.

Vedanta Desika's Vairagya Panchakam expresses the same ideas. Desika says it is a sad state of affairs, when even jnanis praise the wealthy for the material benefits that such flattery will get them.

Desika asks if one cannot use grains that lie scattered on the road and wear torn clothes? Even if *Jaadaraagni*, the fire in the belly, were to burn fiercely, he will not seek help from a king, says Desika. He says that he has the indestructible treasure called Narayana, and that there is no need for him to seek riches.

Insurance cover in '25

Amit Chhabra

Year 2025 was remarkable for insurance with some great regulatory milestones, including the zero GST reform and for Indians as they started seeing insurance as a foundational decision for financial planning rather than borne out of need to save tax.

This pattern was consciously visible across health and travel cover and even the way people paid for it. Across these verticals, buyers moved towards higher covers, longer policy tenures and broader protection, while payment behaviour showed growing comfort with recurring, automated premium commitments.

Shift to meaningful protection

With the removal of GST on individual health cover, policyholders decided to invest savings into securing a larger cover reflecting the positive change this reform brought to policyholders. Average sum insured jumped by 31%, from ₹14.5 lakh to ₹19 lakh. Tellingly, policies below ₹10 lakh saw a sharp dip of 29% YoY and a 24% slide post GST, whereas covers in the ₹10-25 lakh bracket surged by about 45%. In fact, cover above ₹25 lakh nearly doubled.

This showed Indians became more aware of healthcare inflation and treatment realities. Unlimited health plans, a niche segment a year ago, accounted for a meaningful share of purchases of about 16% in 2025.

Perhaps the most significant trend is the move towards longer tenures. with 4- and 5-year tenures increasing by 56% and 62%, each clearly showing consumers' preference for continuity over annual decision fatigue.

The awareness is deepening well beyond metros with tier-3 cities now accounting for a dominant share (70%) of health cover purchases. Younger buyers, too, are entering earlier, choosing stronger covers and add-ons such as Day 1 benefits and OPD riders.

Travel insurance

A similar transformation in consumer behaviour was seen in travel cover as well with a 15% YoY growth in policy issuance. It was also observed higher sum insured selections was the norm.

People traveling to the U.S. and Canada increasingly opted for covers as high as $5,00,000, acknowledging the realities of overseas healthcare costs. For Europe, Asia and other regions, $2,50,000 emerged as the preferred safety net. The reason for such covers is explained by the claims data. While the most frequent claims included baggage delays and trip disruptions, it was medical emergencies that continued to prevail claim value. After all, a single hospitalisation abroad can outweigh the cost of an entire trip. The spike in coverage is explained by the rise in the number of senior travellers who constituted 15% of insured travellers.

Payments: backbone of insurance

In 2025, UPI firmly emerged as the default mode, accounting for almost two-thirds of all premium payments. UPI Autopay registrations also rose and recorded around 1.5 million new registrations. This showed consumers are increasingly comfortable treating insurance like a subscription service rather than a one-time transaction. This was especially visible in life insurance where monthly payments dominated at 94% while annual payments accounted for only about 5%. In health cover, buyers were split with 61% opting for annual payments, and 35% choosing monthly.

Emergence of Buy-Now-Pay-Later for insurance premiums showed a subtle shift indicating rising demand for short-term liquidity support without the traditional credit friction. Besides, a spike of about 15% in purchases on GST exemption and the sharp rise in festive periods showed insurance decisions still influenced by timing. Regulatory relief, rising medical costs and digital-first payment rails together pushed buyers towards higher protection, longer tenures and frictionless ways to pay. 2025 firmly cemented the fact that insurance is moving away from being an impulsive purchase to being a conscious choice towards financial stability.

(The writer is Chief Business Officer, General Insurance, Policybazaar.com)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

Usual procedure: Questions of ownership are beyond the purview of banks or financial institutions. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Nominee vs. legal heir: who is legally entitled to funds?

If a nominee has been appointed for a bank account, the bank may release funds to the nominee; however, ownership of those funds follows inheritance law, or a Will, not the nomination form

MONEY TRANSFER

Vaishali R. Venkat

We must plan for the seamless transfer of our money and assets to those we intend to leave them to after our demise. Unfortunately, many people mistakenly assume that merely nominating someone for each asset is sufficient and nomination per se automatically transfers ownership to the nominee after the death of the account holder or asset owner. In reality, asset ownership works very differently.

> In most cases, a nominee acts as a custodian or trustee, receiving or holding money/asset on behalf of legal heirs who are rightful owners under succession law

> Nomination eases fund transfer but does not determine ownership. With just nomination, money/assets may not be distributed/ transferred as intended

Who is a nominee?

Let's say Karthik appointed his 21-year-old daughter, Sudha, as the nominee for all bank deposits and savings account. This means Sudha is merely the designated person to receive the money from the bank after Karthik's demise; she is not the sole owner of the funds released by the bank. In other words, nomination ensures a smooth and hassle-free release of funds by the institution, but does not confer ownership.

Legally, in most cases, a nominee merely acts as a custodian or trustee, receiving or holding the money or asset on behalf of the legal heirs who are the rightful owners under the inheritance law. For instance, assume Karthik is also survived by his mother, wife and a son. In that case, the mother, wife, his son and daughter are all his legal heirs and legally entitled to his monies and assets. Therefore, though the bank may hand over the funds/assets to his daughter, who is a nominee, the legal heirs are entitled to claim their lawful share in accordance with the succession law. In short, the nominee acts only as a custodian, whereas ownership of the funds or assets vests in the legal heirs.

Why nominee is paid?

After the demise of an account holder, the bank/financial institution releases the funds to the nominee to avoid delays and administrative complications. They are more concerned with the seamless transfer of funds; questions of ownership are beyond their purview. Payment to the nominee enables the bank to close the account and discharge its responsibility.

However, such payment neither determines/transfers ownership of the funds nor overrides legal heir rights under respective succession laws.

Who is a legal heir?

A legal heir is the one who is entitled to inherit the money/assets of the deceased person under succession law or a valid Will. In short, they are the rightful legal owners of the funds. In Karthik's case, his mother, wife, son and daughter are all legal heirs.

Legal heirs are determined by personal laws such as the Hindu Succession Act, Indian Succession Act, the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937 or any other applicable inheritance laws.

The Hindu Succession Act is applicable to Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, and includes Virashaiva, a Lingayat or a follower of the Brahmo, Prarthana or Arya Samaj. The Indian Succession Act applies to Christians and Parsis and, by implication, to Jews and others not governed by the Hindu or Muslim personal law. For Muslims in India, inheritance and succession matters are governed by the Muslim Personal Law.

In the absence of a valid Will, these laws determine who the heirs are and the proportion in which they are entitled to inherit the deceased person's assets. Where a valid Will exists, it governs inheritance, but succession laws apply to assets not covered by the Will or where the Will cannot legally operate.

In Karthik's case, if he passed away without leaving a valid Will, the manner in which his money and assets are distributed to his legal heirs will be determined by the applicable succession law based on his religion. If Karthik is a Hindu, then, as per the Hindu Succession Act, his mother, wife, son, and daughter would inherit his assets as legal heirs in the manner prescribed under that law, irrespective of who is named as the nominee. Therefore, even if Karthik had appointed his daughter Sudha as the nominee, such nomination would not make her the sole owner of the funds or assets, nor would it confer full ownership upon her.

What if there is a Will?

If Karthik had executed a valid Will, his assets would be distributed in accordance with the Will, and the provisions of the Hindu Succession Act would apply only to any property not covered by the Will.

Succession laws would apply only to assets not covered by the Will or where the Will is invalid or incapable of being given effect to. Nomination eases fund transfer and does not determine ownership. Relying only on nomination is not estate planning and money/assets may not be distributed/transferred as intended. Note: while nomination rules and succession laws apply to most financial assets, insurance cover operates differently.

(The writer is an NISM & CRISIL-certified Wealth Manager and certified in NISM's Research Analyst module)

Setting up SIP on an active fund

THINKINVESTOR

Each year, statistically test the risk-adjusted return of investments in active funds. This will help you be mindful of the fact if each fund is generating returns as per hopes to achieve life goals

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Deciding whether to invest in active or passive equity funds is not easy. Choosing a passive fund is simple and behaviourally optimal. Investing in an active fund can generate positive alpha. The additional cash flow generated from the positive alpha can be useful while achieving life goals. But negative alpha can hurt you more than the positive alpha of the same magnitude giving you happiness.

Yet, many invest in active funds in the hope of generating consistent positive alpha. In this article, we discuss the process you can adopt to manage the risk, and the regret associated with active funds.

Active process

Systematic investment plans (SIPs) are meant to make investment process easy. So, it is natural for an individual to set up a SIP in an equity fund to match the time horizon for a life goal. For instance, an eight-year SIP for an eight-year goal. This argument works well if the SIP is on an index fund or an ETF, as the before-cost returns on these funds must mirror that of the benchmark index.

In contrast, SIPs on active funds should be set up for 12 months at a time regardless of the time horizon for a life goal. Why? You invest in an active fund to earn positive alpha.

So, you must evaluate the fund's performance on an annual basis. Hence, the SIP for 12 months at a time.

You must be mindful of the choices you face with active funds at the end of each 12-month period through the time horizon for a life goal. The following are the choices: You should renew SIP for another 12 months if you are satisfied with the fund's performance. What if you are not satisfied with the performance? You can still renew the SIP if you decide to stay with the fund for another year. Otherwise, you have two choices. Either switch to another active fund or switch to a passive one.

If you switch to a passive fund, you can set up the SIP for the remaining time horizon for the life goal.

Conclusion

Every year, you must statistically test the risk-adjusted return (Sortino Ratio) of your investments in active funds.

Following this process will help you be mindful of whether each fund is generating returns according to your expectations to achieve your life goal. Your investments in active funds may have generated handsome returns in the past. It is nevertheless important that you review their annual performance.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks				
AU Small Finance Bank	7.10	6.35	7.10	6.75
Equitas Small Finance Bank	7.30	7.00	7.00	7.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	7.60	4.75	6.00	5.75
Jana Small Finance Bank	7.77	7.00	7.50	7.77
Shivalik Small Finance Bank	7.50	6.00	6.75	6.25
slice Small Finance Bank	7.75	6.25	7.50	7.00
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.25	7.25	8.00
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	7.45	7.25	7.20	7.20
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	7.50	6.00	7.50	7.00
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	6.45	6.25	6.45	6.45
Bandhan Bank	7.20	7.00	7.00	5.85
City Union Bank	6.75	6.50	6.50	6.25
CSB Bank	7.00	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	6.60	6.30	6.40	6.25
DCB Bank	7.15	6.90	7.00	7.00
Federal Bank	6.75	6.25	6.75	6.40
HDFC Bank	6.45	6.25	6.45	6.40
ICICI Bank	6.50	6.25	6.45	6.50
IDFC FIRST Bank	7.00	6.30	7.00	7.00
IndusInd Bank	7.00	6.75	6.90	6.65

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	7.00	6.50	6.65	6.60
IDBI Bank	6.50	6.20	6.35	6.25
Karnataka Bank	6.65	6.50	6.15	6.15
Kotak Mahindra Bank	6.70	6.50	6.40	6.25
RBL Bank	7.20	7.00	7.20	6.70
SBM Bank India	7.30	7.00	7.10	7.00
South Indian Bank	6.60	6.35	6.20	5.70
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.10	6.80	6.60	6.60
YES Bank	7.00	6.65	7.00	6.75
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	6.45	6.10	6.25	6.30
Bank of India	6.70	6.25	6.25	6.00
Bank of Maharashtra	6.65	6.20	5.25	5.00
Canara Bank	6.50	6.25	6.25	6.25
Central Bank of India	6.50	6.20	6.00	6.00
Indian Bank	6.45	6.10	6.05	6.00
Indian Overseas Bank	6.60	6.50	6.10	6.10
Punjab National Bank	6.40	6.10	6.30	6.10
Punjab & Sind Bank	6.60	5.85	5.85	5.95
State Bank of India	6.45	6.25	6.30	6.05
Union Bank of India	6.30	6.25	6.00	5.90

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
			(In %)
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	7.25-8.70	7.25-8.70	7.25-8.70
Bank of Baroda	7.20-9.00	7.20-9.00	7.20-9.25
Union Bank of India*	7.15-9.50	7.15-9.50	7.15-9.50
Punjab National Bank	7.25-9.10	7.20-9.00	7.20-9.00
Bank of India	7.10-10.00	7.10-10.00	7.10-10.25
Bank of Maharashtra	7.10-9.90	7.10-9.90	7.10-9.90
Punjab and Sind Bank	7.30-10.70	7.30-10.70	7.30-10.70
Indian Overseas Bank	7.10 #	7.10 #	7.10 #
Indian Bank	7.15-9.55	7.15-9.55	7.15-9.55
Central Bank of India	7.10-9.15	7.10-9.15	7.10-9.15
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.70 #	7.70 #	7.70 #
ICICI Bank	7.45 #	7.45 #	7.45 #
Axis Bank	8.35-11.90	8.35-11.90	8.35-9.35
HSBC Bank	7.45 #	7.45 #	7.45 #
South Indian Bank	7.80 #	7.80 #	7.80 #
Karur Vysya Bank	8.50-10.65	8.50-10.65	8.50-10.65
Karnataka Bank	7.30-11.68	7.30-11.68	7.30-11.68

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
			(In %)
Federal Bank	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.90 - 9.30	7.90 - 9.30	7.90 - 9.30
Bandhan Bank	8.41-12.58	8.41-12.58	8.41-12.58
RBL Bank	8.20 #	8.20 #	8.20 #
CSB Bank	8.05 #	8.05 #	8.05 #
HDFC Bank	7.90 #	7.90 #	7.90 #
City Union Bank	8.25-9.50	8.50-10.00	8.75-10.50
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	7.15 #	7.15 #	7.15 #
Bajaj Housing Finance	7.15 #	7.15 #	7.15 #
Tata Capital	7.50 #	7.50 #	7.50 #
PNB Housing Finance	7.90 #	7.90 #	7.90 #
GIC Housing Finance	8.20 #	8.20 #	8.20 #
SMFG India Home Finance	10.00 #	10.00 #	10.00 #
Aditya Birla Capital	7.75 #	7.75 #	7.75 #
Sammaan Capital	8.75#	8.75#	8.75#
ICICI Home Finance	7.50 #	7.50 #	7.50 #
Godrej Housing Finance	7.75 #	7.75 #	7.75 #

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Lit for Life

Movement is medicine, says Priti Chawla

Priti Chawla

Technology has become an inseparable part of everyday life, and avoiding it is no longer possible. As dependence on screens increases, it has repercussions for health, on both the body and mind, said fitness coach Priti Chawla on Sunday. Ms. Chawla said that sitting in front of a screen for long periods significantly reduces muscle activation by nearly 90% compared to standing or walking. She said: "Movement is medicine. Small changes matter, and the body adapts quickly and positively when given the chance".

Discussion on writing fiction in times of AI

Where is fiction's place in today's world? What role does it play at a time when AI is being used to write wedding speeches and obituaries? Does fiction make us empathetic, and what, then, is the writer's ultimate motivation to create? Fiction writers Andaleeb Wajid and Keshava Guha sought to answer these questions during a session moderated by Radhika Santhanam on Sunday. They spoke about their creative processes, particularly while constructing characters of genders different from their own. The conversation also touched upon writer's block, oppression, and the role of female readers in the fiction space. Both authors said that while AI has integrated itself into daily life, the technology could hinder the ability to read and write well.

Andaleeb Wajid and Keshava Guha in conversation with Radhika Santhanam in Chennai on Sunday. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Understanding India and its inequalities

Manu Joseph

India is one of the most unequal places in the world. And yet, the poor working classes have not revolted. Why? This is the question author and journalist Manu Joseph tries to answer in his new book *Why the Poor Don't Kill Us*. "Apparently everybody has got this question," he said during a session, delivered in the style of a stand-up monologue that attempted to blend humour, anecdote, and provocation. One of his less obvious explanations for social stability lay in the country's aesthetics, or lack of it.

INBRIEF

The Hindu's Games section relaunched in a new avatar

At *The Hindu* Lit for Life festival on Sunday, Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson, The Hindu Group, relaunched *The Hindu's* Games section on the website and *The Hindu* app. The relaunched platform includes the Crossword section with Sunday Special Cryptic, Easy Down, and *The Hindu* Mini. The Mini Sudoku section contains easy, medium, hard and killer levels; Word Flower includes Word search and Word Row that is equivalent to *The New York Times's* Wordle. Those interested can explore the Games section at newsth.live/games and scan the QR code to join the WhatsApp group and interact with fellow gamers.

Need to move beyond quick fixes: mental health experts

There is a need to move away from episodic interventions for mental illness and provide longitudinal care, experts said at a session on "Resilience and hope: women and their mental health journeys" on Sunday. In a conversation moderated by Soma Basu, Neha Kirpal, co-founder of Amaha and the India Mental Health Alliance, and Dr. Lakshmi Narasimhan, mental health researcher and practitioner at The Banyan, an NGO working on mental health issues, reflected on lived experience, care models, and the need to move beyond quick fixes in India's mental health discourse. Care cannot be approached in isolation, they said.

A sense of helplessness prevailing in Kashmir: Dulat

A sense of helplessness prevails in Kashmir in the current political scenario and Delhi is not bothered about what was happening there, according to A.S. Dulat, former chief of the Research and Analysis Wing, the country's external intelligence agency. "Kashmir is at a standstill, there is a status quo now. The Kashmiris live on hope more than anything else and there is a sense of helplessness," he said in response to a question from Shobhana K. Nair, Senior Deputy Editor, *The Hindu*, on the evolution of relationship between governments of Jammu and Kashmir and the Centre.

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Banu Mushtaq speaks on encounters that shaped her award-winning book

The International Booker Prize winner highlights the impact of the Bandaya Sahitya movement and speaks about writing from lived experiences; the author describes her writing process as instinctive rather than planned and speaks of her journey into journalism, advocacy, and fiction

Priyamedha Dutta
CHENNAI

That unspoken truths lay at the heart of *Heart Lamp*, was the crux of a compelling session at *The Hindu* Lit for Life, where writer and activist Banu Mushtaq was in conversation with journalist Pankaja Srinivasan. The discussion traced the lived histories, Kannada political movements, and intimate encounters that shaped *Heart Lamp*, Ms. Mushtaq's internationally recognised book that won the International Booker Prize, 2025.

Making of a masterpiece: International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq in conversation with journalist Pankaja Srinivasan on Sunday. R. RAGU

Opening the conversation, Ms. Srinivasan located *Heart Lamp* within a larger moral and political landscape – where everyday injustice forms the texture of ordinary lives. Ms. Mushtaq responded by returning to the Bandaya Sahitya Movement of the 1970s in Karnataka, a period of intense social churn that profoundly influenced her world view.

Key movement

The Bandaya movement, she explained, emerged from widespread unrest among youth who questioned caste hierarchy, patriarchy, class oppression, and linguistic dominance. Alongside the Dalit movements, farmers' collectives, and the feminist movement, Bandaya Sahitya sought to challenge the literary and social status quo that showcased how literature cannot remain detached from lived experiences.

"Though the scale has changed, the spirit of resistance remains active even today," Ms. Mushtaq said. She then spoke about her personal journey into activism and writing. Giving up teaching after marriage and confined within domestic expectations, she described the suffocation that pushed her towards public life. Later, she turned that into journalism, advocacy, and eventually fiction.

Ms. Srinivasan drew attention to the emotional universality of Ms. Mushtaq's stories – how women from certain socio-economic and religious contexts speak a universal language that goes far beyond the boundaries of Karnataka. Ms. Mushtaq explained that her stories are not direct reproductions of real life, but grow organically from fragments.

"A single sentence, a gesture, a facial expression," Ms. Mushtaq said. "It is how one cooks, or how one sings," she said, describing writing as an instinctive process rather than a planned one.

Only when characters, dialogue, and structure are complete does she "record" the story, almost as if witnessing a film unfold in her mind.

The session closed with a brief glimpse into her forthcoming book – a work, she hinted, would be rich with drama, resistance, and survival.

Real health comes when there are better policies, says Rujuta Diwekar

Preeti Zachariah
CHENNAI

In the past three decades, trends in health have come and gone, but Rujuta Diwekar's advice remains unchanged: eat local, traditional, whole foods, exercise regularly, and get to bed on time.

"We have known each other for 15 years since your first book. And I admire the fact that your messaging hasn't changed at all," said Shonali Muthalaly, Features Editor (Lifestyle and Entertainment), *The Hindu*, who was in conversation with the celebrity nutritionist and writer, at a session titled "Why dieting made us fat: on weight loss, metabolism and why food is not the enemy".

Health capsules: Writer Rujuta Diwekar in conversation with Shonali Muthalaly on Sunday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

In response, Ms. Diwekar said it was more important than ever before to "speak about local, seasonal, traditional, because everyone can see that time and again, the messaging of the weight loss industry, the food industry and now even the pharma industry and beauty industry keeps changing. They want us to adhere to a new standard every single day." She said this had left people more confused than ever before. Also, less healthy. Part of the problem, she strongly believes, is social media, which is filled with Instagram influencers "who have no clue" offering health advice.

"This whole belief that we have that it takes discipline and willpower to get fit is a misunderstood one, coming out of privilege and not really understanding," she insisted, adding that real health comes when there are better policies, such as those that help protect everyone.

"That is the stuff that improves the health of a nation, and not gyms, protein shakes and probiotics," she says.

Shobhaa De speaks on intimacy, pleasure

Need for dialogue: Shobhaa De with Rosella Stephen, Senior Associate Editor, *The Hindu*, on Sunday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Sangita Rajan
CHENNAI

Shobhaa De's new book, *The Sensual Self: Explorations of Love, Sex & Romance*, is a wider examination of how we feel about pleasure, more than anything else. "It is not a 'how-to' sex manual, I'm sorry to disappoint," she said. "It's not a Kama Sutra for 2026 at all."

In conversation with Rosella Stephen, Senior Associate Editor, *The Hindu*, Ms. De positioned the book as "part mirror, part memoir, part quest", rooted in lived experience rather than prescription. Reflecting on her early novels, beginning with *Socialite Evenings*, she said the rawness that once shocked readers was deliberate. "There were no books reflecting that new, exciting urban India back then," she said, recalling how the idea that a woman might leave a marriage simply because it did not fulfil her desires unsettled readers.

Ms. Stephen framed Ms. De as a writer who "insisted that India speak frankly and without apology", observing that her work has consistently challenged social discomfort around sex, intimacy, and desire. That discomfort, Ms. De argued, has only deepened over time. "The word 'intimacy' itself is terrifying to our society," she said, adding that for many young people their most intimate relationships are with their phones.

Erosion of romance

Much of the discussion focused on what Ms. De sees as the erosion of romance and sensual attentiveness.

"Holding hands is a language in itself," she said, lamenting the absence of eye contact, flirting, and tenderness. Words such as "courtship" and "suitor", she noted, now invite confusion. "Young people ask me, 'What does it even mean?'" The discussion returned repeatedly to what Ms. De described as society's refusal to prepare young people, especially women, for intimacy. From the romanticised idea of the *suhagraat* to the silence around consent, she argued that ignorance is institutionalised. The insistence on dialogue, rather than instruction, is what gives *The Sensual Self* its relevance.

Experts give valuable advice on wealth building and smart spending habits

S. Poorvaja
CHENNAI

At *The Hindu* Lit For Life, finance experts Rohit Sarin, co-founder of Client Associates and author of *Unlocking Wealth: Secrets to Getting Rich at Any Age*, and Devina Mehra, Chairperson and Managing Director of First Global and author of *Money, Myths and Mantras*, decoded all things wealth, youngsters and their spending habits, and how to wade through the avalanche of financial advice available, in a conversation with Lavanya Mohan, chartered accountant and author of *Money Doesn't Grow On Trees*.

Money matters: Devina Mehra and Rohit Sarin in conversation with Lavanya Mohan on Sunday. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

"We have to get comfortable with what we are spending and what we want to spend in the future. If you are constantly visiting your own finances and going through them, it is a much more fruitful exercise. It is important to get comfortable with your finances," Ms. Mohan said.

Speaking about the pitfalls she sees with present-day spending habits, Ms. Mehra said while it was fine to look at Instagram and get the urge to replicate everything that is out there there was no point jeopardising one's financial future. Emphasising the importance of beginning to invest early, Mr. Sarin said that right from the first pay cheque, youngsters should carve out 10% and begin to invest in a disciplined way.

Writer's block part of the process, not a painful experience, says Kiran Desai

Kiran Desai engages in a conversation with Nirmala Lakshman on love, longing, and the quiet distances that shape relationships, set against textures of class, culture, and displacement; 'Loneliness is an essential component of the vocabulary of migration,' says the Booker Prize-winning author

Sahana Mira S.
CHENNAI

Book talk: Author Kiran Desai in conversation with Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson of The Hindu Group and founder of *The Hindu* Lit for Life, on Sunday. RAGU R.

In a conversation with Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson of The Hindu Group and founder of *The Hindu* Lit for Life, on Sunday, Booker Prize-winning author Kiran Desai spoke about how "loneliness is an essential component of the vocabulary of migration", which she chose to look at in her 2025 Booker Prize-shortlisted novel, *The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny*.

"The more people, the more lonely we are, such a strange thing," Ms. Desai began, "and perhaps how we are all suffering from being in societies that are unravelling in the midst of change, which leaves us feeling bereft."

Ms. Desai spoke about her compulsion to explore why this was happening, through her novel. The author said that of all the books she might write in the future, this might be the last one that she had written that was set in India.

In her novel, she said, she was writing about far more cosmopolitan protagonists, and wanted to speak about their desire for the Western world, where her protagonists are in fact educated to leave the country.

"There are enormous power divides, enormous divides of race and gender, and when you are out in the big world, you have to overcome them and keep your dignity intact. In a world that is deeply power divided, the location of your dignity is much smaller than you imagine, which is what both my protagonists realise leaving India for a larger landscape," she said, adding how they were searching for home and belonging in the novel.

Sonia's solitude

Ms. Lakshman observed that despite the precise prose, there was lyricism in almost every paragraph of the novel. She also raised the question of whether slowness and deliberation should inform the lives of people in any way. On the case of the protagonist Sonia, the modern, educated woman who was in an abusive relationship in the novel, Ms. Desai said that abuse of women cut across every class.

After Ms. Desai read an excerpt from *The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny*, Ms. Lakshman asked how her mother, renowned author Anita Desai, had inspired her, and whether she had become a writer because of her. "I inherited my mother's bookshelf and all her beautiful copies of Indian books that she carried with her to the United States. I also inherited her discipline of writing, and the rhythm of her writing life," she said.

Ms. Desai added that writer's block was a pleasure for her, and that these patient moments were part of her artistic and spiritual practice. "I mull things over, and go over my sentences. I enjoy that meditative time. So I think it is about how you look at it. I don't see it [writer's block] as a painful experience, quite the opposite," she added.

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INBRIEF

Writing and publishing in the age of artificial intelligence

Is there still room for writing? With AI generating reading materials, is this the end of books or is there still hope? These questions were posed by Rosella Stephen, Senior Associate Editor, *The Hindu*, to a panel including Elizabeth Kuruvilla, publishing director of Simon & Schuster, literary agent Kanishka Gupta who runs the Writer's Side, and former editor-in-chief of Penguin Random House India, Manasi Subramaniam, on Sunday at *The Hindu* Lit for Life. They spoke at the session titled "Publishing in the Age of Infinite Voices: Curation or Chaos?". "Perhaps AI could take over the unbelievably boring things publishers do," Ms. Subramaniam said, while Mr. Gupta added using AI to write a book defeats the purpose of literary fiction.

Laura Spinney on the history of language and migration

Today nearly half of humanity speaks an Indo-European language. How did that happen? In a conversation with Aienla Ozukum, about her book, *Proto: How One Ancient Language Went Global*, journalist Laura Spinney traced the history of Proto-Indo-European, which originated on the frontier of Europe and Asia and spread throughout Eurasia. It died a long time ago, but it gave birth to hundreds of other languages. These include Hindi, English, Spanish, Russian, and Greek. Migration has shaped the languages we speak, she explained. "For aeons, people have claimed language as a tool to reinforce their identity and claim superiority. What the story of the Indo-European languages shows is that boundaries have meant very little in this story."

'T.N. advancing brilliantly into modern age with religion'

Gopalkrishna Gandhi, former West Bengal Governor and author of *India and Her Futures*, on Sunday said that while Tamil Nadu is advancing brilliantly into the modern world, he is unsure whether the "unnecessary baggage of the Old is dropped". In conversation with Carnatic singer and author T.M. Krishna at *The Hindu* Lit for Life, Mr. Gandhi, while speaking about the Tamil communities in Sri Lanka and India, said that religion would have naturally yielded its place where commerce, industry, science and technology is booming. "But, in Tamil Nadu, it has not done so. Tamil Nadu is advancing brilliantly into the modern age with religion. But, I am not sure whether what should be dropped in the Old is being dropped as we move into the New," he said.

On verses that speak beyond language

Triple play: Ashwani Kumar and K. Srilata in conversation with Ranvir Shah on Sunday. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Kamalika Chatterjee

The Hindu Lit For Life featured a session titled "*Poets on Poets*" on Sunday, with Ranvir Shah exploring the world of poets and poetry alongside K. Srilata and Ashwani Kumar. The session delved deeply into what shapes a poet's journey. With both artists sharing their encounters and their obstacles, they educated the audience on what poetry feels like in a multi-linguistic country such as India.

While they did agree that translated poetry can be difficult, the only way to do it right is to encapsulate the heart and soul of the poem rather than just words.

"Poetry is the essence of life and love. If you've ever felt emotions, poetry is the true way to express them, as it not only helps you understand yourself more deeply but also allows you to put yourself and your thoughts out there," said Mr. Kumar.

The poets later captivated the audience with readings from several poems.

The session concluded with the felicitation of the winners of *Poetry With Prakriti*, a poetry contest held by the Prakriti Foundation, an arts and culture-based non-governmental organisation. The discussion concluded with a tribute to Geeta Doctor, as Chairperson of The Hindu Group and founder of *The Hindu* Lit for Life Nirmala Lakshman presented the first Geeta Doctor Fellowship instituted by Prakriti Foundation, to Ilampirai, a Tamil and English poet. The fellowship offers a grant of ₹5 lakh to an upcoming poet with no linguistic restrictions.

Gods live in the pain and dreams of ordinary people, says Mari Selvaraj

Udhav Naig
CHENNAI

Stories about life: Film director Mari Selvaraj in conversation with writer and historian Stalin Rajangam on Sunday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Critically acclaimed and commercially successful filmmaker Mari Selvaraj on Sunday said it was not useful to search for gods in places of worship, as they were intertwined with the lives, pain, dreams, and tears of ordinary people.

He was speaking at the Sir Mutha Venkatasubba Rao Concert Hall at Lady Andal School at Chetpet, Chennai.

The filmmaker was in conversation with writer Stalin Rajangam during the closing session of *The Hindu* Lit For Life on Sunday.

Responding to a question on the use of indigenous myths in his films such as Kattupechi in *Karnan*, the winged pigs and worship of indigenous gods in *Maamannan* and other works, posed by writer and historian Mr. Rajangam, Mr. Selvaraj explained why and how he incorporated myths into his cinematic narratives.

"My father used to drive away ghosts in my village. I had no belief in gods but my father would keep talking to gods. He used to work all day and in the night, he would speak to gods. My village was stricken with poverty. When someone came to us seeking help to drive away a ghost, my father would start speaking like a ghost or a god. I was confused at the time whether he was an honest man. But he was an honest, hard-working man. I took my art from there," the filmmaker said.

However, Mr. Selvaraj added, "I was never a disciplined guy. I would come home very late, sometimes in the middle of the night. He would wake up in the night, walk outside the village and break four eggs and come back. Next day, I would be asked not to come late by my mother. She would tell me that my father said that I came with my sister who passed away [shown in *Vaazhai*] or my friend who died many years ago."

'Questioning injustice'

"When I started observing my father, I realised that he was living in another world and he was questioning injustice, conversing with people, arguing with them. That's when I realised that gods are closely intertwined with poor people's lives, in their pain, in their tears. It is a waste of time searching for gods in temples but they are present in the tears, questions, pain, and hard work of ordinary people," he said.

When Mr. Rajangam asked whether he felt the burden of political identities and debates around his politics while making films, the filmmaker said, "I want to win over those who are against me. Those who didn't like *Pariyerum Perumal*, *Maamannan*, or *Karnan* today may understand these films 10, 15 years later. Usually, whenever my films release, I am being placed before my film. My critics often slam me before watching my film. Every time I make a film, my hope is that, through my conflicts, questions, moral rights, tears and my pain, I can win everyone over. The only pressure I feel is only from the Censor Board."

Translation invites readers to inhabit new linguistic world: Deepa Bhasthi

Priyamedha Dutta
CHENNAI

Sense and semantics: Deepa Bhasthi in conversation with Nandini Krishnan in Chennai on Sunday. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

At *The Hindu* Lit for Life, Deepa Bhasthi unpacked the choices, politics and power behind translating Kannada into English.

"There is no such thing as proper English." That opening remark by writer and translator Ms. Bhasthi anchored one of the sessions at *The Hindu* Lit for Life titled "Reimagining stories", moderated by writer and translator Nandini Krishnan. The discussion centred on Ms. Bhasthi's acclaimed translation of *Heart Lamp*, the International Booker Prize-winning collection of Kannada stories by Banu Mushtaq.

Ms. Bhasthi was unequivocal that her role went far beyond that of a linguistic mediator.

In selecting, editing and translating these works, she acted as editor, interpreter and cultural custodian, shaping what global readers now recognise as Ms. Mushtaq's literary voice in English.

"It wasn't just the labour of translation," she noted, "but the choices on what to include, what to leave out, that travelled internationally," Ms. Bhasthi says.

Ms. Bhasthi opened the session by reading out an excerpt from the Kannada version of *Heart Lamp*.

On text and texture

The discussion lingered on her decision to retain culturally specific terms such as *ganda*, *pati*, *yajamana*, and *akki roti* without any footnotes. Such choices allow the English version of *Heart Lamp* to carry an accent, a geography and a lived social texture.

Translation, for her, is not about erasing difference but about inviting readers to inhabit another linguistic world. "I am more led by the language than the writer. I want the reader to understand as much of Kannada linguistic culture as possible... If someone can learn a new Kannada word, then why not?" Ms. Bhasthi says.

Ms. Bhasthi spoke about resisting the idea of a "neutral" or "global" English, particularly one shaped by colonial or metropolitan standards, which is why "south Indian speech rhythms deliberately find space in the stories," says Ms. Bhasthi.

She also acknowledged moments of negotiation, particularly with Western publishers unfamiliar with Indian languages. The term "nursing home", she recalled with humour, proved to be one of the rare compromises.

The session also explored how Ms. Bhasthi's translations across different authors demand different forms of attentiveness.

With *Heart Lamp*, she said, the process required immersion into unfamiliar religious and cultural registers, including Urdu and Arabic influences within Kannada.

'Women of all ages'

On being asked about death as an underlying theme across the stories, Ms. Bhasthi spoke about how they are peppered with dark humour rather than being an easy or light read.

"I wanted to ensure that all stages of womanhood are touched upon, from a young bride to an old woman. You realise patriarchy and religious fundamentalism affect women of all ages," Ms. Bhasthi says.

Despite winning one of the world's most prestigious translation prizes, Ms. Bhasthi noted that translators continue to remain marginal figures.

"As long as reviewers keep calling translations 'seamless', they erase the labour and thinking behind every line," she observes.

Ultimately, the session foregrounded Ms. Bhasthi not just as a translator of *Heart Lamp*, but as a thinker reshaping how Indian literature travels, insisting that readers learn to listen to stories that challenge them linguistically.

Lit for Life

Cerebral games: Participants of a quiz during *The Hindu* Lit for Life at Lady Andal School in Chennai on Sunday. V. UMESH KUMAR

Audience connect: Members of the audience posing questions after the screening of *Wild Tamil Nadu*. V. UMESH KUMAR

Young enthusiasts: Writer Banu Mushtaq interacting with children at the venue. V. UMESH KUMAR

Indelible impressions: A visitor writing a message at the Lit for Life venue. V. UMESH KUMAR

Remembering the life and times of Periyar

Historic contributions: A.R. Venkatachalapathy in conversation with Kavitha Muralidharan on Sunday. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

B. Kolappan
CHENNAI

Historian A.R. Venkatachalapathy said that the tendency to counterpose the contributions of Kerala's social reformer Narayana Guru with those of social reformer Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, the founder of the Dravidian Movement, was unhealthy and often used to deride and diminish Periyar.

"It is the same with Nehru and Patel [Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel]. If you want to celebrate someone, we are all for it. But if the idea is to run down Nehru, I am not comfortable with it. Narayana Guru's contribution is amazing," he said, responding to a question on the relative success and legacy of Periyar vis-à-vis Narayana Guru.

Mr. Venkatachalapathy was speaking during an interaction with journalist Kavitha Muralidharan, on the topic "Periyar: icon or iconoclast?" He said that any question that grappled with Periyar's personality was inherently difficult.

Recalling Periyar's political journey, he noted that even when Periyar was president and secretary of the Congress, he articulated independent views, notably through his support for the Hindu Religious Endowments Act.

Mr. Venkatachalapathy, who co-edited *The Cambridge Companion to Periyar* with Karthick Ram Manoharan, said that unlike figures such as Vallalar or Thayumanavar, Periyar did not believe in gentle persuasion to make people abandon entrenched beliefs. "He believed in shock therapy," he said.

"In the 1920s, he said idols should be turned over and used as washing stones, and in 1972, he said adultery should be removed from the penal code. When did any lawyer take up the issue of the iniquitous nature of adultery?" he asked.

Mr. Venkatachalapathy said that Periyar's personality was evident in the fact that he refused to be shattered even after the exodus of almost all the major leaders, including C.N. Annadurai, V.R. Nedunchezhian and M. Karunanidhi, following his marriage to Maniammai.

'Bristled with idioms'

"He shifted his base from Chennai to Tiruchi and toured every nook and corner of the State. He used a language that was diametrically opposite to the kind of Tamil platform we were familiar with. His health was also failing. He would sit, informally dressed, express the most provocative ideas, and share his wisdom. Every paragraph of his speech bristled with idioms and proverbs that no folklorist could have collected in the last hundred years," he said.

Speaking about the book's portrayal of Maniammai, Periyar's second wife, Mr. Venkatachalapathy said she was an intellectual in her own right and deserved a separate biography. "If there is a book on Manalur Maniammai (the Communist leader), why not a book on Vellore Maniammai?" he asked. Recalling the calumny heaped on her following her marriage to Periyar in 1949 and 1950, he said that present-day slander spread through WhatsApp could not hold a candle to the attacks she faced then.

He added that from 1944 onwards, Maniammai contributed regularly to *Viduthalai* and *Kudi Arasu*, the official organs of the Dravidar Kazhagam, and that her writings, particularly on Kanthapuranam, were sharp and incisive.

Narayana Guru's life remains relevant even a hundred years later: Tharoor

The social reformer's impact on Dalits in Kerala was arguably deeper than that of Dr. Ambedkar in northern India, says Lok Sabha member; recalling Narayana Guru's 'seminal contributions' to the State, he says his book on the reformer is an attempt to capture essential details of his remarkable life

N. Sai Charan
CHENNAI

Sree Narayana Guru's influence, impact, and success in the lives of Dalits in Kerala were arguably deeper and more transformative than that of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in northern India, said Congress leader and former Union Minister Shashi Tharoor at *The Hindu* Lit for Life in Chennai on Sunday.

Mr. Tharoor, in conversation with L.V. Navaneeth, Chief Executive Officer, The Hindu Group, on the topic (also the name of his book) "*The Sage Who Reimagined Hinduism*", said he had grown up outside Kerala and had only a vague sense of the reformer. "Knowing that practically every neighbourhood and every corner in my [Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha] constituency had a shrine for Sree Narayana Guru, was astonishing as such a giant, who had done so much to transform Kerala society, remained completely unknown outside the State," Mr. Tharoor said.

Remembering a saint: Author Shashi Tharoor speaks on *The Sage Who Reimagined Hinduism* in conversation with L.V. Navaneeth, CEO, The Hindu Group. R. RAGU

When a couple of Kerala's leading newspapers conducted polls at the end of the millennium on the greatest Malayali of all time, Sree Narayana Guru won hands down, Mr. Tharoor said, adding that his book was an attempt to capture the essential details of his remarkable life and the extraordinary lessons, which were incredibly relevant even a hundred years later.

Responding to a question on Narayana Guru's approach to social reform compared with other leaders, Mr. Tharoor said he would rank him in the highest plane because of the way he transformed both the understanding of Hinduism as a faith and the Hindu society, and thereby Indian society, particularly on the issue of caste.

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When Swami Vivekananda visited Kerala, he was so appalled by the caste discrimination he saw, he described the region as a lunatic asylum. Kerala has come a long way, and that the greatest and most seminal contribution to that transformation was that of Sree Narayana Guru, Mr. Tharoor said.

Vaikom Satyagraha

Speaking about the Vaikom Satyagraha, Mr. Tharoor described it as a major event in the nationalist struggle. He said the agitation began when 'untouchables' were denied access to roads leading to a temple in Vaikom. He said Gandhi*ji* believed in passive resistance by Satyagrahis who would sit in front of the barricades.

"While Sree Narayana Guru's followers fundamentally differed on this point, the reformer felt they had to be assertive, but not violent. He urged people to climb onto the barricades and walk into the temple," Mr. Tharoor said.

Storytelling traditions of northeast should be nurtured: Janice Pariat

Saptarshi Bhattacharya
CHENNAI

Literature on India's northeast has to acknowledge the tussle between the freedom to practice people's traditional way of life and attempts to categorise, box, and label them, author and poet Janice Pariat said. Across the region, there were intricate, powerful forms of oral storytelling tradition that carried indigenous knowledge and science, often dismissed as folklore, which required to be nurtured and brought forth, she added.

Rich traditions: Janice Pariat and Jim Kasom in conversation with Aienla Ozukum on Sunday. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Responding to questions from moderator Aienla Ozukum, a publisher, on how the characters in her novel *Everything the Light Touches* navigate between home and exile, and belonging and estrangement, Ms. Pariat felt that the characters were, in fact, motivated by ways of seeing the world.

"It is a book motivated by questions like 'who gets to name the world', 'who gets to impose a way of seeing [it] and render every other way of seeing as superstition, folklore, or even silence'," she said at the session titled "Inside Outside" at *The Hindu* Lit for Life.

Ms. Pariat said traditional ways of life were pushed to the extent of erasure by colonisation and vast amounts of epistemological violence committed on them. Though confined to a geography, the region was alive, muscular, and vibrant only because it was entangled with other places, histories, peoples, and communities, Ms. Pariat added.

Answering questions about the conflict between the intimate Naga life and the external pressures of history and politics in his collection of short stories, *The Last Free Naga*, author Jim Kasom said the central theme of the stories was freedom to practice the Naga way of life, which many mistook as a demand for Naga sovereignty. Modernisation gave rise to the need for an identity but his characters raised questions on the very need for such identity. The book also captured the paradox of the romanticised village life that is serene on one side and the dark shadows of AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act), on the other, he said.

The Chessmaster and a never-ending quest

Mind games: Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand, five-time World Chess Champion, with K.C. Vijaya Kumar on Sunday. M. SRINATH

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

There is no air of pretence about Viswanathan Anand, when he speaks on or off stage. The five-time World Chess Champion wears his stature lightly, and an easy warmth accompanies him wherever he goes. That affability and genuineness were on full display during a conversation titled "The Chessmaster and his moves" with K.C. Vijaya Kumar, Sports Editor of *The Hindu*, during *The Hindu* Lit for Life festival.

At the age of 56, Mr. Anand is in fine physical shape, and more importantly, looking at a busier competitive calendar in the coming season after finishing runner-up in the rapid segment at the prestigious Tata Steel tournament recently. "In fact, this year, I will try to play more often and hopefully be in a situation where my breaks from the game are not so long," Mr. Anand said.

Characteristically downplaying his own role in India's chess revolution, Mr. Anand instead marvelled at the scale and speed of the game's growth since he became a Grandmaster in 1988. "It staggers me," he said. "Out of 92 Grandmasters in India, I believe around 70 became GMs after 2010. On almost any measure, we are at least among the top three nations in chess."

Fitness matters

Fitness, Mr. Anand observed, has become increasingly central to modern sport – and chess is no exception. "A game of chess will exhaust you physically," he said. "When you finish a couple of hours of intense work at the board, you are still running on adrenaline."

Mr. Anand also differed from the commonly held notion that today's youth struggle to focus because of increased distractions. "The real challenge has always been the same – learning how to do intense, fully concentrated work on one problem in order to excel," he said.

What makes Anand a competitive player even now? "It's the pleasure in tricking an opponent (on the board) and winning games," the Grandmaster said, when replying to a question from the audience.

Structuring choices behind theatrical reading of *The Tamils*

Geetha Srimathi
CHENNAI

Prasanna Ramaswamy, editor and director of the theatrical reading of *The Tamils: A Portrait of a Community*, a book authored by Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson of The Hindu Group, said that translating a massive book about the history of Tamil society into a 55-minute theatrical format required structuring choices.

The reading was presented at *The Hindu* Lit for Life on Saturday by Ms. Lakshman, along with artists Anita Ratnam, Revathy Kumar, Sarvesh Sridhar, Tehzeeb Katari, Brahadeeshwar C. Chandilya, and Nandhini Subbulakshmi.

Nirmala Lakshman, Prasanna Ramaswamy and others at the theatrical reading of the book on Saturday. R. VENGADESH

Interspersed with verses from *Kurunthogai* of Sangam literature, Thirunavakkarasu's *Thevaram*, the *Naalayira Divya Prabandham* and Bharati's patriotic songs, the reading traced excerpts from the book through the Pallava, Pandya, Chola and Chera dynasties, and the contributions of the Maratha, Christian, and the Muslim communities to Tamil culture.

Ms. Ramaswamy said, "I chose the references of art and literature through different ages as discussed in the book as the major

> The book keeps examining the religious history of Tamil Nadu through its political history, which became another marker for me
> **PRASANNA RAMASWAMY**

punctuation and took liberty on sourcing poems to render musically."

The presentation was further divided into different registers of performance – what was spoken directly to the audience, what unfolded as shared dialogue, and what emerged as reflective passages delivered by the actors as readers. Alongside poems referenced in the book, additional poems were sourced and rendered musically. Some sections also incorporated classical dance performance.

"The book keeps examining the religious history of Tamil Nadu through its political history, which became another marker for me," Ms. Ramaswamy said.

MADRID

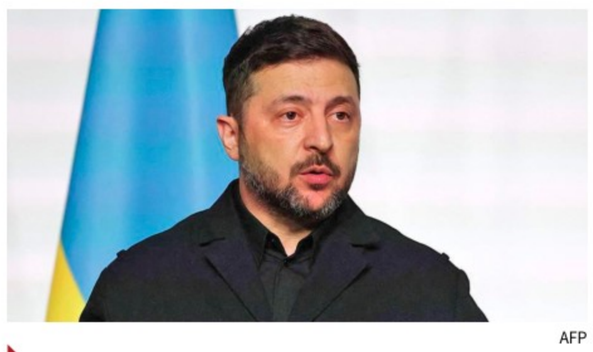
‘U.S. invasion of Greenland would make Putin happiest man on earth’

REUTERS

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said a U.S. invasion of Greenland “would make Putin the happiest man on earth” in a newspaper interview published on Sunday. He said any military action by the U.S. against the Arctic island would damage NATO and legitimise the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. REUTERS

KYIV

Two killed in mass Russian drone attack on Ukraine, says Zelenskyy

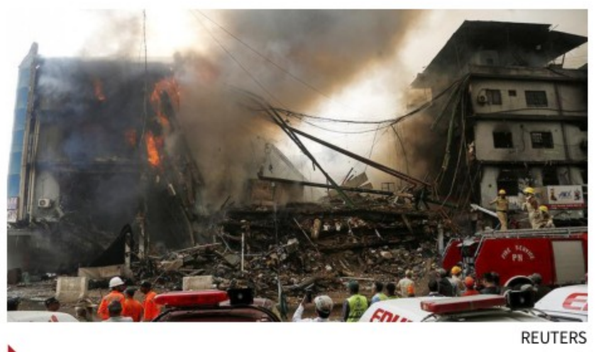


AFP

Two persons were killed and dozens more wounded in a mass Russian drone attack across Ukraine overnight, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday. He said the Sumy, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, Khmelnytskyi and Odesa regions were targeted in an attack that included more than 200 drones. REUTERS

KARACHI

Six dead, many trapped after fire breaks out at Pak.’s Karachi mall



REUTERS

Six persons, including a firefighter, were killed, and several others remained trapped more than 12 hours later after a massive fire broke out at a huge shopping mall in Pakistan’s Karachi, officials said on Sunday. The firefighters and rescue teams were trying to put out the fire 16 hours after it started, officials said. PTI

ESCUINTLA

Police regain control of Guatemala prison after guards taken hostage

REUTERS

Guatemalan police on Sunday regained control of a high security prison, freeing nine guards taken hostage by gang member inmates, authorities said. The gang members are still holding 28 hostages at the Fraijanes II and another nine at the Preventivo prison, located east and on the outskirts of the Guatemalan capital. AFP

EU warns against Trump’s tariff threat over Greenland

Agence France-Presse
BRUSSELS

Ursula von der Leyen

European Union leaders on Saturday warned against U.S. President Donald Trump’s threat to impose tariffs on European countries until he has achieved his purchase of Greenland.

Cyprus, which holds the rotating presidency of the European Council, announced an extraordinary meeting of EU ambassadors in Brussels for Sunday afternoon.

And one senior German MEP said Mr. Trump’s latest threat raised a question mark over the EU-U.S. trade deal agreed last year.

EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen and Antonio Costa, president of the European Council, issued the joint statement hours after Mr. Trump threatened multiple European nations with tariffs of up to 25%.

“Tariffs would undermine transatlantic relations and risk a dangerous downward spiral,” they wrote in a post on social media.

“Europe will remain united, coordinated, and committed to upholding its sovereignty,” they added.

The statement came days after Danish and Greenlandic officials held talks in Washington over Mr. Trump’s bid to acquire the territory, without reaching agreement.

“The EU stands in full solidarity with Denmark and the people of Greenland,” said the EU statement.

“Dialogue remains essential, and we are committed to building on the process begun already last week between the Kingdom of Denmark and the U.S.”

Brussels and Washington clinched a deal in July for most EU exports to face a 15% U.S. levy, but both sides are still pushing for additional trade concessions.

‘Pentagon readies 1,500 troops for possible deployment to Minnesota’

Trump had threatened on Thursday to invoke the Insurrection Act to deploy military forces if officials fail to stop protesters from targeting ICE agents; tensions rose after an ICE agent fatally shot U.S. citizen Renee Good on Jan. 7 during a traffic stop

Reuters
WASHINGTON

Members of Customs and Border Protection and other security forces stand guard during a protest in Minneapolis. REUTERS

The Pentagon has ordered about 1,500 active-duty soldiers to prepare for a possible deployment to Minnesota, the site of large protests against the government’s deportation drive, U.S. media reported on Sunday.

The Army placed the units on prepare-to-deploy orders in case violence in the northern state escalates, the *Washington Post* reported, citing unnamed defence officials, adding that it is not clear whether any of them will be sent.

The White House told the *Post* in a statement that it is typical for the Pentagon “to be prepared for any decision the President may or may not make”. The Pentagon and the White House did not immediately respond to requests from Reuters for comment.

U.S. President Donald Trump threatened on Thursday to use the Insurrection Act to deploy military forces if officials in the state do not stop protesters from targeting immigration officials after a surge in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents.

“If the corrupt politicians of Minnesota don’t obey the law and stop the professional agitators and insurrectionists from attacking the Patriots of I.C.E., who are only trying to do their job, I will institute the INSURRECTION ACT,” Mr. Trump posted on his Truth Social platform.

Confrontations between residents and federal officers have become increasingly tense in Minneapolis, Minnesota’s most-populous city, after an ICE agent fatally shot Renee Good, a U.S. citizen and mother of three, on January 7 as she was driving away after being ordered to exit her car.

Mr. Trump, a Republican, has sent nearly 3,000 federal agents from ICE and Border Patrol to Minneapolis and neighbouring St. Paul since early last week. Local leaders have accused the President of federal overreach and of exaggerating isolated episodes of violence to justify sending in troops.

Syria announces ceasefire with Syrian Democratic Forces

Associated Press
RAQQA

Syria’s new leaders, since toppling Assad in December 2024, have struggled to assert full authority

The Syrian government on Sunday announced a ceasefire with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), taking almost full control of the country and dismantling the Kurdish-led forces that controlled the northeast for over a decade.

The announcement comes as tensions between government forces and the SDF boiled over earlier this month, eventually resulting in a major push by government forces toward the east. The SDF appeared to have largely retreated after initial clashes on a tense front line area in eastern Aleppo province.

Syria’s Defence Ministry said it ordered the fighting to halt on the front lines after the agreement was announced. The SDF did not confirm the agreement, nor immediately respond to a request for comment.

Syria’s new leaders, since toppling Bashar al-Assad in December 2024, have struggled to assert their full authority over the war-torn country. An agreement was reached in March that would merge the SDF with Damascus, but it didn’t gain traction as both sides accused each other of violating the deal.

Netanyahu objects to Gaza panel, holds coalition meet

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Benjamin Netanyahu

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened a meeting of his ruling coalition partners on Sunday after objecting to the composition of a Gaza advisory panel formed by the White House, according to an official and media reports.

The White House announced this week the setting up of a “Gaza Executive Board,” which would operate under a broader “Board of Peace” to be chaired by U.S. President Donald Trump as part of his 20-point plan to end the war in Gaza.

The executive board, described as having an advisory role, includes Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Qatari diplomat Ali Al-Thawadi, alongside other regional and international officials.

Late on Saturday, Mr. Netanyahu’s office objected to the composition of the executive board.

“The announcement regarding the composition of the Gaza Executive Board, which is subordinate to the Board of Peace, was not coordinated with Israel and runs contrary to its policy,” the office of Mr. Netanyahu said.

“The Prime Minister has instructed the Foreign Affairs Minister to contact the U.S. Secretary of State on this matter.”

It did not explain the reason for its objection, but Israel has previously objected strongly to any Turkish role in post-war Gaza, with relations between the two countries deteriorating sharply since October 2023.

$1 billion membership

Meanwhile, a draft charter sent to about 60 countries by the United States administration calls for members to contribute $1 billion in cash if they want their membership to last more than three years, according to the document seen by Reuters.

(With Reuters inputs)

At least 5,000 dead in Iran unrest, says official

Reuters
TEHRAN

At least 5,000 people have been killed in protests in Iran, including about 500 security personnel, an Iranian official in the region said on Sunday, citing verified figures and accusing “terrorists and armed rioters” of killing “innocent Iranians”.

The nationwide protests erupted on December 28 over economic hardship and swelled over two weeks into widespread demonstrations calling for the end of clerical rule – resulting in the deadliest unrest since the 1979 Islamic revolution. U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to intervene if protesters continued to be killed on the streets or were executed. In a social media post on Friday, he thanked Tehran’s leaders, saying they had called off scheduled mass executions.

Separately, Iranian authorities have said they are considering “gradually” restoring Internet access after imposing an unprecedented communications shutdown 10 days ago, which rights groups say masked a protest crackdown that killed thousands.

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BREACHING THE FORTRESS

Kiwis halt India's winning streak in ODIs at the Holkar Stadium

R.V. MOORTHY

New Zealand ended India's winning streak in ODIs at the Holkar Stadium in Indore. The 41-run loss in the series decider halted India's seven-match unbeaten run at the venue. India had beaten England and Australia twice besides getting past the West Indies, South Africa and the Kiwis once prior to Sunday's loss.

NO WORRIES

Skipper Gill backs strike-bowler Kuldeep to 'learn and grow'

FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

India captain Shubman Gill said he was not worried about Kuldeep Yadav's form. "It happens sometimes. Kuldeep, the way he has been bowling, has always been a strike bowler for us. It is unfortunate that he wasn't able to pick as many wickets as he would have liked to, but it happens. These are the series where you learn and grow".

EXCELLENT WORK

Mitchell praises Kiwi groundsmen for helping the team prepare well

R.V. MOORTHY

International cricket means you get to travel the world and experience different surfaces and different ways of scoring runs on them. I'd say our preparation back home has been excellent, and we're very fortunate to have groundsmen in New Zealand who do a great job helping us prepare for these conditions — Daryl Mitchell.

GROWING IN STATURE

Harshit has been impressive in the series with the bat: Gill

R.V. MOORTHY

Harshit (Rana) has been impressive in the series with the bat. He is someone who is clearly improving. Number eight is a very important position for us. When we look at other teams around the world, they bat very deep. I'm very happy with how he is growing and contributing to the team — Shubman Gill.

Kohli special goes in vain as Kiwis script history

Mitchell and Phillips flatten the Indian attack as the visitors post an imposing 337; Nitish and Harshit try hard in the company of the 'chase master', but the Black Caps hold their nerve

Turning point: Centurions Mitchell and Phillips added 219 for the fourth wicket as the Kiwis overcame the early setbacks. R.V. MOORTHY

NZ IN INDIA

Tarun Shastry
INDORE

Different ground, different surface, different conditions – historic outcome. Daryl Mitchell once again proved to be India's chief tormentor, hammering his second consecutive century (137, 131b, 15x4, 3x6), while Glenn Phillips complemented him with a scintillating hundred (106, 88b, 9x4, 3x6). Their belligerent 219-run fourth-wicket partnership proved decisive as New Zealand scripted its first-ever ODI series victory in India as the hosts fell short by 41 runs in the decider at the Holkar Stadium on Sunday.

Chasing 338, India suffered early blows, losing Rohit Sharma in the fourth over to Zak Foulkes and captain Shubman Gill to Kyle Jamieson in the seventh. Shreyas Iyer's stay was brief, falling to Kristian Clarke, while left-arm spinner Jayden Lennox sent back K.L. Rahul, leaving India in trouble at 71 for four in the 13th over.

Virat Kohli (124, 108b, 10x4, 3x6) then took charge. He stitched an 88-run fifth-wicket partnership along with Nitish Kumar (53, 57b, 2x4, 2x6).

Nitish was eventually dismissed by Clarke and Lennox accounted for Ravindra Jadeja as India slipped to 178 for six. Kohli and Harshit Rana (52, 43b, 4x4, 4x6) threatened to pull off a heist. The two added 99 runs off just 69 balls before Foulkes accounted for the latter. Kohli's special knock was ended by Clarke and with it went India's hopes.

Earlier, after Gill opted to bowl, Arshdeep Singh struck off the fourth ball, dismissing Henry Nicholls for a duck.

Harshit removed Devon Conway in the next over as New Zealand slipped to five for two. Mitchell and Will Young then rebuilt with composure. Young attacked with fluent drives and a pull over deep backward point off Harshit before falling to him, ending a 53-run third-wicket stand.

Mitchell found an able ally in Phillips. The pair gradually lifted the tempo, running hard between the wickets and keeping the scoreboard ticking.

Mitchell signalled intent by launching Kuldeep Yadav straight down the ground for a six off his first ball.

Momentum decisively swung in the 40th over as Jadeja was taken for 13. Kuldeep, too, bore the brunt, conceding 19 in the following over.

Phillips brought up his second ODI century with a sublime off-side drive. Arshdeep ended the mammoth partnership by dismissing Phillips, while Mohammed Siraj removed Mitchell.

However, skipper Michael Bracewell's 18-ball 28 ensured the visitors posted an imposing total.

SCOREBOARD

NEW ZEALAND
Devon Conway c Rohit b Harshit 5 *(4b, 1x4)*, Henry Nicholls b Arshdeep 0 *(1b)*, Will Young c Jadeja b Harshit 30 *(41b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Daryl Mitchell c Kuldeep b Siraj 137 *(131b, 15x4, 3x6)*, Glenn Phillips c Rahul b Arshdeep 106 *(88b, 9x4, 3x6)*, Michael Bracewell (not out) 28 *(18b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Mitchell Hay lbw b Kuldeep 2 *(6b)*, Zak Foulkes c Kuldeep b Arshdeep 10 *(8b, 1x4)*, Kristian Clarke b Harshit 11 *(5b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Kyle Jamieson (not out) 0 *(0b)*; Extras (b-5, nb-2, w-1): 8; Total (for eight wkts. in 50 overs): 337.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-5 (Nicholls, 0.4 overs), 2-5 (Conway, 1.1), 3-58 (Young, 12.1), 4-277 (Phillips, 43.1), 5-283 (Mitchell, 44.1), 6-286 (Hay, 45.2), 7-304 (Foulkes, 47.1), 8-327 (Clarke, 48.6).

INDIA BOWLING
Arshdeep 10-1-63-3, Harshit 10-0-84-3, Siraj 10-0-43-1, Nitish 8-0-53-0, Kuldeep 6-0-48-1, Jadeja 6-0-41-0.

INDIA
Rohit Sharma c Clarke b Foulkes 11 *(13b, 2x4)*, Shubman Gill b Jamieson 23 *(18b, 4x4)*, Virat Kohli c Mitchell b Clarke 124 *(108b, 10x4, 3x6)*, Shreyas Iyer c Foulkes b Clarke 3 *(10b)*, K.L. Rahul c Phillips b Lennox 1 *(6b)*, Nitish Kumar c Young b Clarke 53 *(57b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Ravindra Jadeja c Young b Lennox 12 *(16b)*, Harshit Rana c Nicholls b Foulkes 52 *(43b, 4x4, 4x6)*, Mohammed Siraj c Hay b Foulkes 0 *(1b)*, Kuldeep Yadav run out 5 *(3b, 1x4)*, Arshdeep Singh (not out) 4 *(2b, 1x4)*; Extras (lb-1, nb-1, w-6): 8; Total (in 46 overs): 296.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-28 (Rohit, 3.6), 2-45 (Gill, 6.4), 3-68 (Shreyas, 11.2), 4-71 (Rahul, 12.5), 5-159 (Nitish, 27.3), 6-178 (Jadeja, 32.1), 7-277 (Harshit, 43.4), 8-277 (Siraj, 43.5), 9-292 (Kohli, 45.4).

NEW ZEALAND BOWLING
Jamieson 9-0-58-1, Foulkes 9-0-77-3, Clarke 9-0-54-3, Lennox 10-0-42-2, Mitchell 1-0-10-0, Phillips 8-0-54-0.

Toss: India.
Player-of-the-Match and Player-of-the-Series: Mitchell.
New Zealand won by 41 runs to clinch three-match series 2-1.
Next match: First T20I: January 21, Nagpur, 7 p.m.

Sublime effort: Kohli threatened to pull off a heist before falling to Clarke. R.V. MOORTHY

Arsenal extends lead despite Forest stalemate

Agence France-Presse
NOTTINGHAM

Arsenal opened up a seven-point Premier League lead despite failing to break down Nottingham Forest in a 0-0 draw at the City Ground on Saturday.

Later on Sunday, potential challenger Aston Villa lost to Everton 1-0 at home.

In the Bundesliga, Bayern Munich came from behind to win 5-1 at RB Leipzig on Saturday.

In the Serie A, Napoli beat Sassuolo 1-0 to stay six points behind Inter Milan in third while Juventus, in fifth, faltered in Sardinia.

The results: Premier League: Wolves 0 drew with Newcastle 0; Aston Villa 0 lost to Everton (Barry 59).
LaLiga: Getafe 0 lost to Valencia 1 (Gaya 84); Atletico Madrid 1 (Sorloth 48) bt Alaves 0.
Serie A: Parma 0 drew with Genoa 0.
On Saturday: Premier League: Nottingham Forest 0 drew with Arsenal 0.
LaLiga: Mallorca 3 (Muriqi 5, 42, 69-pen) bt Athletic Bilbao 2 (Gomez 8, Nico Williams 45); Real Betis 2 (Ruibal 57, Fornals 83) bt Villarreal 0.
Serie A: Cagliari 1 (Mazzitelli 65) bt Juventus 0; Napoli 1 (Lobotka 7) bt Sassuolo 0.
Bundesliga: RB Leipzig 1 (Romulo 20) lost to Bayern Munich 5 (Gnabry 50, Kane 67, Tah 82, Pavlovic 85, Olise 88).

Change of fortunes: Last year's runner-up Vidarbha crossed the final hurdle. K. MURALI KUMAR

Taide's timely ton sets up Vidarbha's maiden Hazare Trophy triumph

CRICKET

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Vidarbha produced a nerveless performance to beat Saurashtra by 38 runs and win its maiden Vijay Hazare Trophy at the BCCI Centre of Excellence, near here, on Sunday.

After Atharva Taide (128, 118b, 15x4, 3x6) helped set up a target of 318, Harvik Desai's Saurashtra could only reach 279 as Vidarbha came up with an excellent bowling effort to disprove the accepted maxim that chasing teams invariably won.

If not for a 93-run fifth-wicket stand between Prerak Mankad (88, 92b, 10x4) and Chirag Jani (64, 63b, 3x4, 2x6), Vidarbha's margin of victory might have been more comprehensive.

Both Prerak and Jani were let off once, the former on 70 and the latter on 14. But it was captain and left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey who emerged as the man with the golden arm, trapping the dangerous-looking Prerak leg-before on the backfoot.

Jani's dismissal, with 68 runs needed in less than six overs, brought the defending Ranji Trophy champion closer to the coveted white-ball trophy.

It was not long before Chetan Sakariya was excised by speedster Yash Thakur (four for 50) to earn Vidarbha the triumph that more than made up for the disappointing loss to Karnataka in last year's final.

Earlier, after being asked to bat, the Vidarbha openers were mostly steady. There were a few top-edges and inside-edges, giving rise to a few nervous moments. However, Dubey & Co. banished those jitters with some clean and crisp hitting from time to time.

Aman Mokhade did not score big, falling for 33 (45b, 4x4) to finish his season with 814 chart-topping runs. But Vidarbha had a new hero in Taide, who conjured his first century of the tournament in the all-important contest.

That he scored the most against this season's highest wicket-taker Ankur Panwar (31 from 18 balls) was a good indicator of the quality of his innings.

The pick-up shots off pacer Sakariya, and the rousing pulled sixes off Dharmendra Jadeja and Prerak, showcased his overall mastery.

Vidarbha stood at a dominant 213 for one when Taide scooped a low full-toss from Panwar to Prerak at mid-on. Though the outfit wobbled from there, losing wickets at regular intervals, Darshan Nalkande hit 13 of the 16 runs that came off the final over to take his team to 317 for eight. It was a cushion that eventually proved handy.

The scores: Vidarbha 317/8 in 50 overs (Atharva Taide 128, Yash Rathod 54, Ankur Panwar 4/65) bt Saurashtra 279 in 48.5 overs (Prerak Mankad 88, Chirag Jani 64, Yash Thakur 4/50).
Toss: Saurashtra.
PoM: Taide; **PoS:** Mokhade.

Lancers shoot out Dragons; Tigers rally to beat Pipers

HIL - MEN

Y.B. Sarangi
BHUBANESWAR

Table-topper Vedanta Kalinga Lancers edged Accord Tamil Nadu Dragons via penalty shootout to remain unbeaten and register its sixth successive win of the Hockey India League at the Kalinga Stadium here on Sunday.

Following a 1-1 deadlock after the regulation period, Lancers beat Dragons 4-1 in the shootout for their second victory through a tie-breaker.

The Tamil Nadu-based team suffered its third loss on the trot.

The determined Dragons seized the momentum in the 19th minute. Following their ill-trapped first penalty corner, Blake Govers beat Krishan Pathak on the left off a penalty stroke.

Five minutes later, Dilpreet Singh deflected in Liam Henderson's cross from the left. But Dragons relied on a video referral to get it cancelled.

Dragons maintained the pressure with their organised and quick moves before Lancers got three consecutive short corners and Alex Hendrickx drew parity with a fast one in the penultimate quarter.

In the shootout, Cooper Burns, Angad Bir Singh, Antoine Kina, and Arthur van Doren scored for the host, while Uttam Singh was the lone scorer for Dragons. Custodian Jed Snowden, who replaced a brilliant Pathak in the tie-breaker, made a superb save.

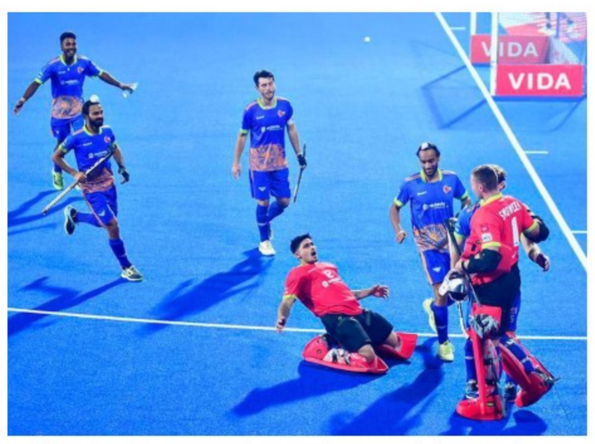
Defending champion Shrachi Bengal Tigers erased a two-goal deficit to beat bottom-placed SG Pipers 3-2 in its last round-robin engagement to post its third win and finish on a high.

Pipers struck early when Aditya Lalage passed it to Dilraj Singh and the latter tapped it in.

Pipers, who saw three of their goals being disallowed due to different reasons, doubled their lead with Tomas Domene's penalty corner conversion.

The relentless Tigers earned six short corners and Jugraj Singh found the mark with a low flick to reduce the margin before the final break.

Abhishek Nain utilised an aerial ball to equalise. Affan Yousuf's winner frustrated Pipers in a contest that was interrupted by heated exchanges.



Jubilant bunch: Lancers players gather around shootout hero Snowden. BISWARANJAN ROUT

The results: Shrachi Bengal Tigers 3 (Jugraj Singh 45-pc, Abhishek Nain 45, Affan Yousuf 48) bt SG Pipers 2 (Dilraj Singh 5, Tomas Domene 31-pc).
Vedanta Kalinga Lancers 1 (Alex Hendrickx 44-pc) drew with Accord Tamil Nadu Dragons 1 (Blake Govers 19-ps); *Lancers won 4-1 via shootout.*

INBRIEF

Advani claims his 11th National snooker crown

Pankaj Advani overcame a late fightback from former champion Aditya Mehta to win 6-3 and claim his 11th National snooker title in the 92nd edition of the premier championship in Bahadurgarh (Haryana) on Sunday.

The results: Final: Pankaj Advani (PSPB) bt Aditya Mehta (PSPB) 6-3 (30-67 (51), 70 (70) -38, 77-6, 75-38, 141 (133) -0, 0-121 (51, 70), 6-67, 63-57, 63-1).
Third-place playoff: Ketan Chawla (MP) bt Laxman Rawat (PSPB) 4-3 (30-76, 8-66, 28-65, 70-53, 67-25, 47-39, 51-17).

England's Pakistan-origin players receive visas

The ICC has stepped in to facilitate visa formalities for all 42 players and officials of Pakistan origin bound for the Men's T20 World Cup in India. In the England squad, cricketers of Pakistan lineage include spinners Adil Rashid, Rehan Ahmed and pacer Saqib Mahmood. The USA will be represented by Ali Khan and Shayan Jahangir, while the Netherlands have Zulfiqar Saqib to name a few. It is learnt that visas have already been cleared for England players Rashid, Rehan and Saqib. Members of the Netherlands squad have also received their visas. Canada staff member Shah Saleem Zafar has been granted clearance. Visa arrangements are underway for players and officials of Pakistan nationality or origin who are part of teams from the UAE, the USA, Italy, Bangladesh and Canada.

Ball girl collapses in Australian Open heat

Play was halted during an Australian Open first-round match on Sunday when a ball girl fainted in soaring temperatures, with players Zeynep Sonmez, *in pic with the girl*, and Ekaterina Alexandrova rushing to help her. Play was suspended for several minutes with temperatures reaching 28C in Melbourne.

LIVE TELECAST

Men's U-19 World Cup: SS Select 2 & JioHotstar, 1 p.m.
Australian Open: Sony Sports Ten 2, 3, 5 & LIV, 1.30 p.m. & 5.30 a.m. (Tuesday)
WPL: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.
HIL: Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: DAZN, 11 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Tuesday)
Premier League: SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)
LaLiga: FanCode, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

An retains title with a scintillating display

The Korean World No. 1 proves too good for the second-ranked Wang as she repeatedly sets up the Chinese, making her work for every point; Taiwanese Lin pulls off an upset victory over the higher-ranked Indonesian Christie in just 38 minutes in the men's singles summit clash

INDIA OPEN SUPER 750

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

A cut above the rest: An and Lin emerged champions with straight-game wins in their respective finals. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

She came, she saw, she won, again. An Se-young continued to prove why she is the most dominant women's badminton player in the world at the moment, retaining her India Open title with a comprehensive 21-13, 21-11 victory over World No. 2 Zhi Yi Wang here on Sunday.

If her dismantling of Ratchanok Intanon in the semifinals was a masterclass, the Korean served a reminder in the final that she had a lot more in her arsenal. The finalists may have been separated by just one place in the world rankings, but on the court, An was simply unbeatable.

She began with probing her opponent at the net, bringing Wang closer with deceptive drops only for the latter to realise they were non-returnable and hit the net or the net cord. She repeatedly set up the Chinese, making her work for every point only to fire a powerful smash down the line, hugging the marking tape on the mat.

With her range of strokes complemented by a strength that Wang struggled to counter, An raced to 7-1 in the opening game before the former switched plans, forcing the latter to go long and wide, earn quick points and close the gap to 15-13. But that was to be the last of her challenge, the second game being even more one-sided with An letting out a scream as the shuttle went wide at the net.

Taiwan's Chun-Yi Lin, meanwhile, completely dominated Jonatan Christie, upsetting the higher-ranked Indonesian in straight games 21-10, 21-18 in just 38 minutes in the men's singles final. Lin, who had to work hard for his previous wins against Lakshya Sen and Victor Lai, did not allow any space and controlled the play even as an increasingly frustrated Christie faded away despite a few sparks of fightback in the second game.

The results (finals): Men: Chun-Yi Lin (Tpe) bt Jonatan Christie (Ina) 21-10, 21-18.
Doubles: Wei Keng Liang & Chang Wang (Chn) bt Hiroki Midorikawa & Kyohei Yamashita (Jpn) 17-21, 25-23, 21-16.
Women: An Se-young (Kor) bt Zhi Yi Wang (Chn) 21-13, 21-11.
Doubles: Liu Sheng Shu & Tan Ning (Chn) bt Yuki Fukushima & Mayu Matsumoto (Jpn) 21-11, 21-18. **Mixed:** Dechapol Puavaranukroh & Supissara Paewsampran (Tha) bt Mathias Christiansen & Alexandra Boje (Den) 19-21, 25-23, 21-18.

Already a bonafide legend, An continues to chase perfection

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

Perfectionist: An says she is disappointed when she makes mistakes and loses a point. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

'How does one beat you' evoked confusion and eventually a giggle from An Se-young as the 23-year-old finally realised the question after winning her 10th match against Zhi Yi Wang in the final of the India Open, her sixth title in as many tournaments.

"I know everyone will try their best to win against me (but) I will try my best not to lose," she smiled.

It is a question few have managed to find an answer to on the World Tour. Last year, An, Paris Olympics champion, reached 12 finals in 15 events, winning 11, a 94.8 match winning percent. It is still not perfect enough for the Korean.

She admits constantly winning is a pressure but also gave a peep into the mindset that makes her so intimidating.

"I feel pressure but I don't think about my feelings. I just try to do my best on the day and focus on the game.

"I am disappointed when I make mistakes and lose a point and when I do, I think I have to do more, try and find out my mistakes and work on them," she said.

This from a player who hasn't dropped a game in nine matches and conceded a grand total of 115 points in five matches here.

"She is stable, strong and plays faster in every aspect. She is one of the strongest opponents but Chen Yu Fei and Tai Tzu Ying are also tough opponents. I will try to improve my abilities and skills, change some strategies and beat her in the future," Wang insisted.

While most other players have struggled with the drift and wind inside the cavernous arena, specially on the far side of the courts, An seems to be unaffected with all the small talk.

"It is not easy," she protested with a laugh when asked about the conditions. "Every player has a different style of playing. I only want to do my best, I see how the court is going on and match my speed and everything else with the court to counter the drift," she shrugged.

Her coach declared they were working on getting even better. "The semifinal (against Ratchanok Intanon) I think was perfect but since she doesn't think so, we are working on her movements, footwork and attacking strokes to get better," coach Lee Hyun-Il explained through a translator. An's own idea of perfection is a 21-0 win. It may not happen soon but the thought is scary enough.

BWF to continue its 25-second time clock trials to curb delays

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) will test its 25-second time clock at the Indonesia Masters next week, continuing trials at select World Tour tournaments to curb tactical delays and standardise match flow, a move that has drawn mixed reactions from players and coaches.

Under the system, the clock starts once the umpire updates the score, with both server and receiver required to be ready to serve and receive before 25 seconds expire.

China's World No. 2 Wang Zi Yi welcomed the move, saying the players would adapt if the rule was enforced uniformly.

"If the rule is going to apply, players will adjust to it. It will address the issue of delay by players," Wang said.

Umpires retain discretion to allow longer breaks in exceptional circumstances such as medical intervention or extensive court mopping.

Tokyo Olympic champion Chen Yu Fei said adjusting after physically demanding rallies could be challenging.

"I think when we finish long rallies, I feel 20-25 seconds is not enough but we can try," she said after finishing at the semifinal.

Approved by the BWF Council at its meeting on August 29 last year, the rules came into effect at the Australia Open Super 500 from November 18 to 23 as part of the federation's initiative to improve sport presentation and ensure continuous play.

Former India doubles player and current coach B. Sumeeth Reddy said standardising the rule was necessary but cautioned that practicality must be factored in.

"Some matches finish fast because players don't take breaks, while some last forever because of repeated pauses. From a spectator's point of view, that becomes boring," he said.

However, he warned against rigid enforcement after physically draining rallies.

The BWF has conducted preliminary system tests without enforcement and plans further trials in the coming months alongside consultations with member associations, coaches and players before deciding on permanent adoption of the system.

Susaki powers Haryana Thunders to the top

PWL

Sports Bureau

Japanese star Yui Susaki proved her mettle, winning by technical superiority 16-0 in just 57 seconds against Saarika to lead Haryana Thunders to a 6-3 victory against Delhi Dangal Warriors and top position on the points table in the Pro Wrestling League in Noida.

In the day's other face-off, UP Dominators produced a dominant performance for a 7-2 win against Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals, led by Under-20 World Champion Antim Panghal's 15-0 technical superiority win against Jyoti Sihag.

The results:
Haryana Thunders 6-3 Delhi Dangal Warriors
Men: 57kg: Ankush Chandram (Haryana Thunders) bt Shubham Kaushik (Delhi Dangal Warriors) 13-3.
65kg: Sujeet Kalkal (Delhi Dangal Warriors) bt Tumur Ochir Tulga (Haryana Thunders) 2-1.
74kg: Turan Bayramov (Delhi Dangal Warriors) bt Parvinder (Haryana Thunders) 8-1.
86kg: Vafaeipour Hadi Bakhtiar (Delhi Dangal Warriors) bt Ashirov Ashraf (Haryana Thunders) Forfeit.
125kg: Anirudh Gulia (Haryana Thunders) bt Ronak (Delhi Dangal Warriors) 13-0.
Women: 53kg: Yui Susaki (Haryana Thunders) bt Saarika (Delhi Dangal Warriors) 16-0.
57kg: Neha Sangwan (Haryana Thunders) bt Karla Godinez Gonzalez (Delhi Dangal Warriors) 18-2.
62kg: Iryna Koliadenko (Haryana Thunders) bt Anjli (Delhi Dangal Warriors) 13-0.
76kg: Kajal Dhochak (Haryana Thunders) bt Anastasiya Alpyeyeva (Delhi Dangal Warriors) 6-5.
UP Dominators 7-2 Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals
Men: 57kg: Aman Sehrawat (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) bt Sagar (UP Dominators) 16-1.
65kg: Vishal Kaliraman (UP Dominators) bt Ali Rahimzade (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 3-2.
74kg: Abhimanyu Mandwal (UP Dominators) bt Naveen Malik (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 4-0.
86kg: Mukul Dahiya (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) bt Mykhailov Vasyl (UP Dominators) 15-2.
125kg: Jaspooran Singh (UP Dominators) bt Oleksandr Khotsianivskyi (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 3-1.
Women: 53kg: Antim Panghal (UP Dominators) bt Jyoti Sihag (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 15-0.
57kg: Tapsya Gahlawat (UP Dominators) bt Alina Filipovych (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 9-0.
62kg: Nisha Dahiya (UP Dominators) bt Olha Padoshyk (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 5-0.
76kg: Mansi Lather (UP Dominators) bt Jyoti Berwal (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 2-1.

Martyn reveals he was given '50-50 chance' of survival

Agence France-Presse
MELBOURNE

In retrospect: Martyn acknowledged that his experience was a reminder of "how fragile life is". FILE PHOTO

Australian Test cricket great Damien Martyn has revealed he was only given a 50 percent chance of surviving after being put in an induced coma with meningitis last month.

The 54-year-old former batsman, who played 67 Tests between 1992 and 2006 and 208 ODIs, was rushed to hospital on December 27. He was in a coma for eight days, but miraculously pulled through and is now back home.

In a heartfelt social media post late Saturday, Martyn said it was touch and go whether he would live and the experience was a reminder of "how fragile life is".

"After being given a 50-50 chance of surviving, I came out of the induced coma eight days later not able to walk or talk. And yet four days after that, with the doctors in disbelief, I walked, talked and proved to them all why I should be released from hospital to start my recovery," he said.

"So happy to be home, to be able to put my feet in the sand on the beach and to start thanking all those people that reached out to me and my family in their unwavering support," he added.

"Bring on 2026... I'm back."

Martyn, known as one of the game's great strokemakers, became a key figure in Steve Waugh's all-powerful Australia side, hitting 13 centuries and averaging 46.37.

Arjun beats Praggnanandhaa; Gukesh draws with Sindarov

CHESS

Press Trust of India
WIJK AAN ZEE

Quick work: Arjun emerged victorious in just 32 moves. FILE PHOTO: DEBASISH BHADURI

Top seed Arjun Erigaisi scored a convincing victory over compatriot R. Praggnanandhaa, while World Champion D. Gukesh played out a hard-fought draw against World Cup winner Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan in the first round of the Tata Steel Masters here.

The first victory was scored by Hans Moke Niemann of the United States, who was pleasantly surprised to notice an optical blunder by Slovenian Vladimir Fedoseev early in the middle game.

Fedoseev resigned as early as on move 16 when material loss was inevitable.

German Vincent Keymer was the other winner as he scored at the expense of Dutch star Anish Giri.

Arjun, Keymer and Niemann share the lead on a full point, a half point ahead of Gukesh and seven others.

Arjun faced the Queen's Gambit accepted against Praggnanandhaa, who erred early in the middle game as his King got stuck in the centre.

Arjun calculated precisely to cause a huge damage to an already weakened King. The game was over in just 32 moves.

Gukesh came close but could not convert his advantage in to a victory over Sindarov who played white.

The Queen's gambit declined, has been in Gukesh's arsenal for quite some time now, and he came up with a stylish queen sacrifice that should have sealed the game on another day.

However, Sindarov was quite resourceful and kept providing resistance even though it looked that his king was in mortal danger. The longest game of the day's contest was drawn after 78 moves.

The other Indian in fray, Aravindh Chithambaram also started off with a draw against Matthias Bluebaum of Germany.

The results (round 1): Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb) drew with D. Gukesh; Arjun Erigaisi bt R. Praggnanandhaa; Aravindh Chithambaram drew with Matthias Bluebaum (Ger); Hans Moke Niemann (USA) bt Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo).
Vincent Keymer (Ger) bt Anish Giri (Ned); Jorden van Foreest (Ned) drew with Thai Dai Van Nguyen (Cze); Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus (Tur) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb).

Triumphant: Elite women's winner Chekole, men's champion Abate and Indian men's winner Karkera cross the finish line. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Super Sunday for Ethiopian runners in Mumbai Marathon

The men's elite category witnesses a tactical battle before Abate produces a decisive surge in the final kilometre; among women, Chekole registers the most significant win of her career

ATHLETICS

Sports Bureau
MUMBAI

Ethiopian runners Tadu Abate Deme and Yeshi Kalayu Chekole emerged victorious in the elite men's and women's races, respectively, at the 21st edition of the Tata Mumbai Marathon, a World Athletics Gold Label Road Race, held here on Sunday.

In the women's elite marathon, Chekole registered the most significant win of her career, clinching her maiden major marathon title in a time of 2:25:13. The 28-year-old executed her race plan with precision, staying within the leading pack through the early stages before breaking away decisively towards the end to finish clear of her compatriots.

"I am very happy to be the champion today," Chekole said after the race. "I came here expecting to break the course record, but the weather made it challenging. Still, I felt strong throughout, especially on the uphill and downhill sections."

Kidsan Alema Gebremedhin finished second, while Gojjam Tsegaye Enyew completed an Ethiopian sweep of the podium.

The men's elite marathon witnessed a tactical battle among East African runners before Abate produced a decisive surge in the final kilometre. Locked in a duel with Kenya's Leonard Kiprotich Langat for much of the race, Abate increased the tempo late to cross the finish line in 2:09:55. Langat followed 15 seconds later, while Eritrea's Merhawi Kesete claimed the third position. "It was a very competitive and tactical race," Langat said. "The course was challenging but well organised."

A delighted Abate credited patience for his success. "The hills were tough, but after halfway I focused on conserving energy and choosing the right moments," he said.

With the twin victories, Ethiopia completed a men's and women's double at the Mumbai Marathon for the seventh time.

The results: Marathon: Elite men: 1. Tadu Abate Deme (Eth, 2:09:55), 2. Leonard Kiprotich Langat (Ken, 2:10:10), 3. Merhawi Kesete Weldemaryam (Eri, 2:10:22).

Elite Women: 1. Yeshi Kalayu Chekole (Eth, 2:25:13), 2. Kidsan Alema Gebremedhin (Eth, 2:27:35), 3. Gojjam Tsegaye Enyew (Eth, 2:28:27).

Elite men Indian: 1. Kartik Karkera (2:19:55), 2. Anish Thapa (2:20:08), 3. Pradeep Chaudhary (2:20:49)

Elite women Indian: 1. Sanjivani Jadhav (2:49:02), 2. Nirmaben Thakor (2:49:13), 3. Sonam (2:49:24)

Half marathon: Men: 1. Gaurav Mathur (1:07:18), 2. Ramesh Gavali (1:11:32), 3. Tanmay Pawar (1:12:27); **Women:** 1. Reenu (1:18:02), 2. Priyanka C. (1:19:13), 3. Ekta (1:23:19).

Glasner feels 'abandoned completely' by the Crystal Palace hierarchy

FOOTBALL

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Crystal Palace manager Oliver Glasner said on Saturday his players were being "abandoned completely" by the club's board after the Eagles' winless run stretched to 10 games with a 1-2 defeat at Sunderland.

Glasner, who revealed on Friday that he will leave the club when his contract expires at the end of the season, had to cope without captain Marc Guehi as the centre-back is set to join Manchester City.

Palace also cashed in to sell Eberechi Eze to Arsenal in August and could reportedly lose star striker Jean-Philippe Mateta to Juventus before the end of the January transfer window.

Glasner led Palace to its first major trophy by winning the FA Cup last season.

Backing them to the hilt: Glasner has stood solidly behind his players, saying they have given it their everything. AP

However, its defence of the title ended in embarrassment as it suffered a reverse against sixth-tier Macclesfield last weekend.

Glasner's side has looked exhausted in recent weeks after already playing 34 times this season in four competitions.

The Austrian defended his players for their poor run, putting the blame on his superiors for not providing him a stronger squad.

"I feel we are being abandoned completely," he said after the Sunderland defeat.

'Going on for weeks'

"I can't blame the players. They did everything they could and this has been going on for weeks and months now.

"We have 12 or 13 players from the squad available and we feel no support. The worst thing is selling our captain one day before playing a Premier League game.

"We are preparing, it's the first (full) week we are training since September, and then we are selling our captain one day before a game. I really can't understand this."

Glasner, 51, has been linked with taking over at Manchester United and Tottenham next season.

Jordi Cruyff is Ajax technical director

Agence France-Presse
AMSTERDAM

Dutch giant Ajax has announced the appointment of Jordi Cruyff, son of club legend Johan Cruyff, as the team's technical director.

Jordi, 51, will start his new role on February 1 on a contract which runs until June 2028.

"It goes without saying how much this means to my family and me," Jordi said on the club's website.

"In the stadium named after my father and at the club that has been important to me since I was young. Ajax is a unique club with a rich history, and I will do everything I can to add a new successful chapter together."

Jordi will notably need to find a new coach for the Amsterdam team after the dismissal of John Heitinga in November.

Ajax is 18 points behind the league leader PSV Eindhoven in the Dutch league, which it lasts won in 2022. In the Champions League, it is 34th out of 36 teams and suffered a record 0-6 loss to AZ Alkmaar in the Dutch Cup last Wednesday.

Club great Johan Cruyff led Ajax to three consecutive European Cup titles in the early 1970s.

An attacking midfielder, Jordi played in the Ajax youth side. During his career, he played for teams including Barcelona and Manchester United and won nine caps for the Netherlands.

After retiring as a player, he managed teams including Maccabi Tel Aviv and Ecuador and in China.

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Fashion beyond fabric

Massimo Casagrande, cultural strategist and Director of Education Istituto Marangoni Paris, on what students need to do to prepare for the future of fashion

Archana Subramanian
archana.subramanian@thehindu.co.in

As fashion evolves beyond garments into culture, technology and storytelling, guidance from industry leaders has never been more critical. Massimo Casagrande, fashion educator, creative consultant, and Director of Education at Istituto Marangoni Paris, shares practical insights on building identity, embracing sustainability, and preparing for the future of fashion.

How should young designers balance cultural identity, storytelling, and global market demands?

Identity should be a source of clarity, not constraint. I always encourage young designers to begin with an honest understanding of where their visual language comes from: their heritage, their rituals, their personal references. But identity becomes powerful only when it is translated into a narrative that a global audience can understand.

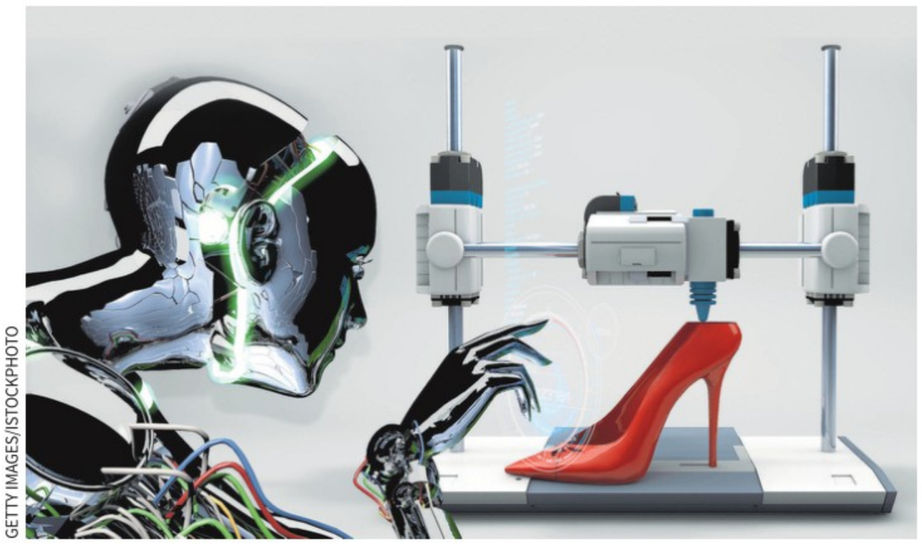
The balance comes from intention. Use your culture as an anchor, not a costume. Select elements that carry meaning and articulate why they matter. At the same time, understand the market you want to enter: its needs, rhythms, sensitivities. When designers learn to position their stories within a broader cultural conversation, their work becomes both locally rooted and globally relevant.

What are the skills that today's students must develop to survive and grow in a competitive and rapidly changing fashion industry?

Curiosity and adaptability are essential. The industry changes faster than any curriculum, so students must cultivate the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn. Technical skill is important, but mindset is decisive. Designers today need strategic thinking, the confidence to experiment, and the resilience to navigate uncertainty. They must understand materials, digital tools, cultural research, and communication. But, equally, they need emotional intelligence, the ability to collaborate, interpret feedback, and articulate ideas.

Sustainability is no longer optional. So how can students incorporate responsible design or ethical practices without compromising creativity or commercial appeal?

Responsible design should never be seen as a restriction. When approached thoughtfully, it becomes a source of innovation. I encourage students to begin with questions: What materials am I choosing and why? What value does this garment add to someone's life? How does it honour craft, labour, and longevity? Sustainability isn't only about materials, it's about intention, process, and impact. Students can experiment with modularity, upcycling, digital sampling, and slow design principles without losing aesthetic expression. When responsibility is integrated from the start, creativity expands because it becomes purposeful rather than decorative.



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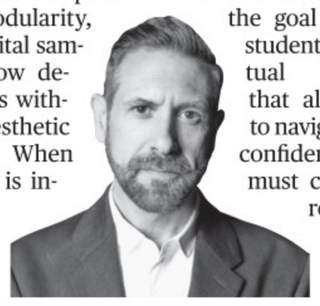

How can design institutes prepare students for careers in AI, digital fashion, and cross-disciplinary collaboration?

Digital platforms, AI, and virtual environments will continue to evolve, so the goal is to give students a conceptual framework that allows them to navigate change confidently. We must create environments where designers learn to collaborate with technologists, coders, artisans, writers, and strategists. Fashion now sits at the intersection of culture, technology and communication, so students must become fluent in multiple languages: visual, digital and narrative. The future belongs to creative thinkers who can move seamlessly between physical and digital worlds without losing authorship.

What opportunities for young designers and craftspeople have on global platforms?

India has something the global industry desperately needs: depth. There is a richness of craft, material intelligence and cultural memory that cannot be replicated. Young Indian designers who work with craft respectfully – not as embellishment but as a design philosophy – have a remarkable opportunity to shape new narratives.

To stand out, they must combine craft with contemporary design thinking. The world is not looking for nostalgic pastiche; it is looking for innovation grounded in authenticity. When Indian designers articulate the story behind the craft and pair it with modern silhouettes, responsible practices and a clear aesthetic point of view, they become incredibly compelling.

What distinguishes successful designers from those who struggle after graduation?

The most successful designers are consistent. They show up with curiosity, discipline and a willingness to evolve. They are open to critique, yet confident in their vision. They understand that creativity is a practice, not a moment of inspiration.

Those who struggle often rely solely on talent. Talent is a starting point, but perseverance and professionalism are what sustain a career. Successful designers know how to build relationships, manage time, communicate ideas and adapt without losing their identity.

Any advice for students in India who wish to pursue fashion education abroad.

Look for a school that expands your perspective, not one that simply confirms it. What truly shapes your career is mentorship, diversity of ideas, and real exposure to industry. Choose a programme that gives you space to experiment, access to new technologies, and a community that challenges you to think critically. Studying abroad should broaden your cultural lens and help you grow as a designer, not just change the address of your classroom.

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Alcaraz, Sabalenka advance; Venus goes down fighting

Zverev drops a set before easing into the second round; Fery produces a big upset by taking down 20th seed Cobolli; Svitolina has it easy while fellow Ukrainians Yastremska and Kostyuk crash out; Paolini outclasses qualifier Sasnovich

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Agence France-Presse
MELBOURNE

Top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz and Aryna Sabalenka launched their Australian Open title bids with straight-sets wins but there was no fairytale for 45-year-old Venus Williams on Sunday.

On a hot Melbourne day, last year's men's runner-up Alexander Zverev dropped a set before easing into the second round.

World No. 1 Alcaraz joined him, the Spaniard beating 81st-ranked home player Adam Walton 6-3, 7-6(2), 6-2 on Rod Laver Arena.

Alcaraz, who is desperate to win the Australian Open to complete the career Grand Slam of all four Majors, plays Germany's Yannick Hanfmann next.

"I think this kind of level and the difficulties in the first round is pretty good for me," said Alcaraz, who was pushed all the way in the second set.

"But overall just happy. I'm pleased about the level that I played today," added Alcaraz, who was playing his first competitive match for nine weeks.

Earlier, in steamy conditions approaching highs of 30° Celsius, Zverev threatened to implode in losing the first set to Canada's Gabriel Diallo.

Bouncing back

But the 28-year-old German recovered from the shock to win 6-7(1), 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 and next meets Australian Alexei Popyrin or Alexandre Muller of France.

Asked how he reset from his first-set wobble, the third seed said: "I was thinking it can't get worse than that."

British qualifier Arthur Fery scored the first big upset by taking down 20th seed Flavio Cobolli of Italy, 7-6(1), 6-4, 6-1.

Novak Djokovic, who is chasing a record 25th Major title, begins his title assault on Monday, as does three-time runner-up Daniil Medvedev.

Sabalenka began her bid for a third Australian Open title in four years with a patchy start before coming good in the second set.

The World No.1, stunned by Madison Keys in the 2025 final, ultimately had too much power, guile and quality for French wildcard Tiantsoa Rakotomanga Rajaonah.

But the Belarusian took time to find her touch, making a series of unforced errors before taming the spirited 20-year-old 6-4, 6-1on Rod Laver Arena.

"It is always tricky playing someone young, someone you don't know, and a lefty (left-hander)," said the top seed and title favourite.

Sabalenka said she had felt added pressure with tennis legends Roger Federer and Rod Laver courtside.

"I hope you guys enjoyed watching me play, I hope you enjoyed it even a little bit," she said in her on-court interview, addressing the duo.

Sabalenka faces Chinese qualifier Bai Zhuoxuan next.

Also safely through was seventh-seeded Italian Jasmine Paolini as she outclassed Belarusian qualifier Aliaksandra Sasnovich 6-1, 6-2.

Elina Svitolina, the Ukrainian 12th seed, eased past Cristina Bucsa of Spain 6-4, 6-1.

But seeded fellow Ukrainians Dayana Yastremska and Marta Kostyuk were dumped out early, as was the American great Venus.

The seven-time Major champion was the oldest woman to play in the history of the Australian Open.

Epic battle

She showed glimpses of what once made her World No.1, but ultimately fell after an epic battle with an opponent more than 20 years her junior. Serb Olga Danilovic outlasted the veteran 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-4.

Day 1 in numbers

1 Venus now holds the record for the most appearances (men and women) in every Slam (Australian Open: 22, Roland-Garros: 24, Wimbledon: 24, US Open: 25)

1 Zverev is the first player to reach the second round in Melbourne in all of the last 10 seasons

3 Jacquemot's win against Kostyuk is the first women's singles match at the Australian Open to be decided via three tie-breaks, and the fifth across all Majors

4 Alcaraz is the fourth man (after Ashe, Borg and Nadal) to win the opening match in each of his first 20 Major appearances

29 Sabalenka has the most wins (among active players) from her first 35 matches at Melbourne Park

39 The Belarusian has the most wins on Australian soil at the WTA level (excluding BJK Cup) since 2023

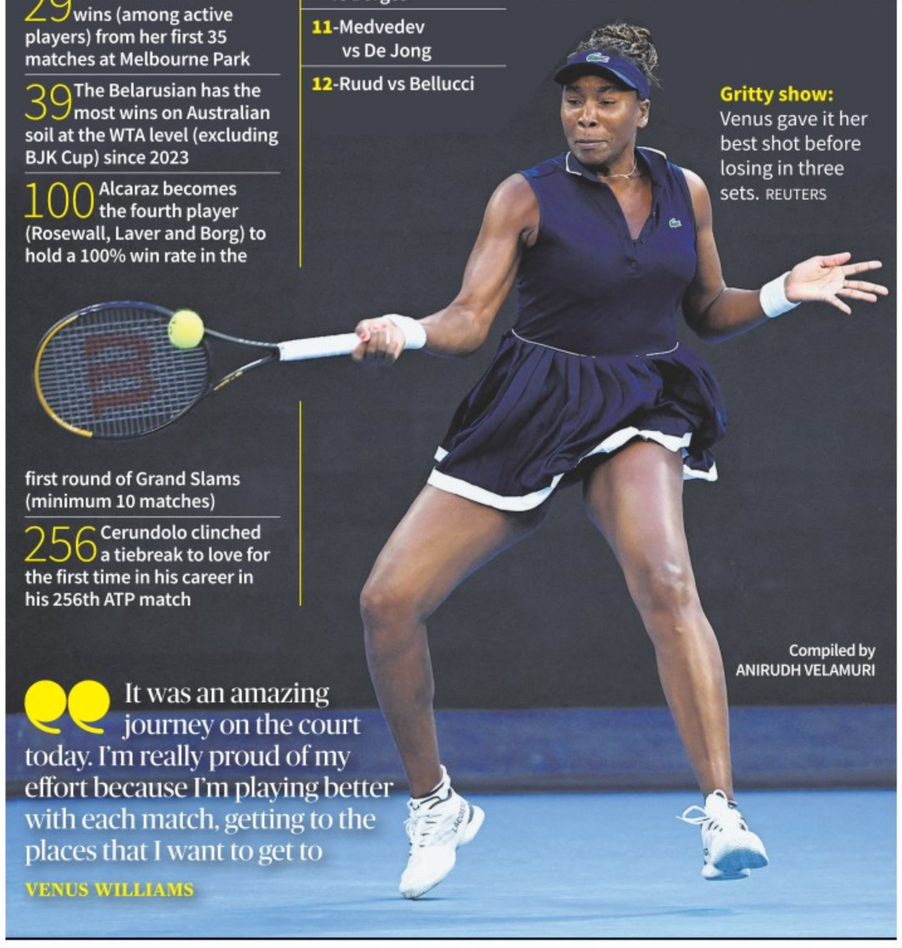
100 Alcaraz becomes the fourth player (Rosewall, Laver and Borg) to hold a 100% win rate in the first round of Grand Slams (minimum 10 matches)

256 Cerundolo clinched a tiebreak to love for the first time in his career in his 256th ATP match

Monday's picks

WOMEN
2-Swiatek vs Yuan
3-Gauff vs Rakhimova
4-Anisimova vs Waltert
6-Pegula vs Zakharova
8-Andreeva vs Vekic

MEN
4-Djokovic vs Martinez
6-De Minaur vs McDonald
7-Auger-Aliassime vs Borges
11-Medvedev vs De Jong
12-Ruud vs Bellucci



Gritty show: Venus gave it her best shot before losing in three sets. REUTERS

Compiled by ANIRUDH VELAMURI

> It was an amazing journey on the court today. I'm really proud of my effort because I'm playing better with each match, getting to the places that I want to get to
> VENUS WILLIAMS

IMPORTANT RESULTS

First round: Men: 32-Moutet (Fra) bt Schoolkate (Aus) 6-4, 7-6(1), 6-3; 10-Bublik (Kaz) bt Brooksby (USA) 6-4, 6-4, 6-4; Fery (GBr) bt 20-Flavio Cobolli (Ita) 7-6(1), 6-4, 6-1.

29-Tiafoe (USA) bt Kubler (Aus) 7-6(4), 6-3, 6-2; 3-Zverev (Ger) bt Diallo (Can) 6-7(1), 6-1, 6-4, 6-2; 18-Cerundolo (Arg) bt Zhang (Chn) 6-3, 7-6(0), 6-3; 1-Alcaraz (Esp) bt Walton (Aus) 6-3, 7-6(2), 6-2; 26-Norrie (GBr) bt Bonzi (Fra) 6-0, 6-7(2), 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Women: 1-Sabalenka (Blr) bt Rajaonah (Fra) 6-4, 6-1; Sonmez (Tur) bt 11-Alexandrova (Rus) 7-5, 4-6, 6-4; Jacquemot (Fra) bt 20-Kostyuk (Ukr) 6-7(4), 7-6(4), 7-6(7); 7-Paolini (Ita) bt Sasnovich (Blr) 6-1, 6-2; 12-Svitolina (Ukr) bt Bucsa (Esp) 6-4, 6-1; Ruse (Rom) bt 26-Yastremska (Ukr) 6-4, 7-5; Danilovic (Srb) bt Venus (USA) 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-4; 28-Raducanu (GBr) bt Sawangkaew (Tha) 6-4, 6-1.

Fallen seeds: Men: 20-Cobolli. **Women:** 11-Alexandrova, 20-Kostyuk, 26-Yastremska.

Bell strikes the right notes for RCB with the new ball

WPL-4

Vivek Krishnan
VADODARA

Bowling fast with the new ball in the T20 format tends to be a double-edged sword. There is an opportunity for early wickets to be snared, but all it takes is for the bowler to err slightly in line or length for the glossy white Kookaburra to travel a fair distance beyond the boundary.

So far in this year's Women's Premier League, it is to Lauren Bell's credit that she has shown the new ball to be a boon rather than a bane. The tall England pacer has done so by finding an immaculate length and giving the ball a chance to swing. It has provided stupendous results, with Bell's eight wickets in four games at a miserly economy of 5.31 in her maiden WPL campaign contributing greatly to Royal Challengers Bengaluru's perfect streak of four wins in four matches.

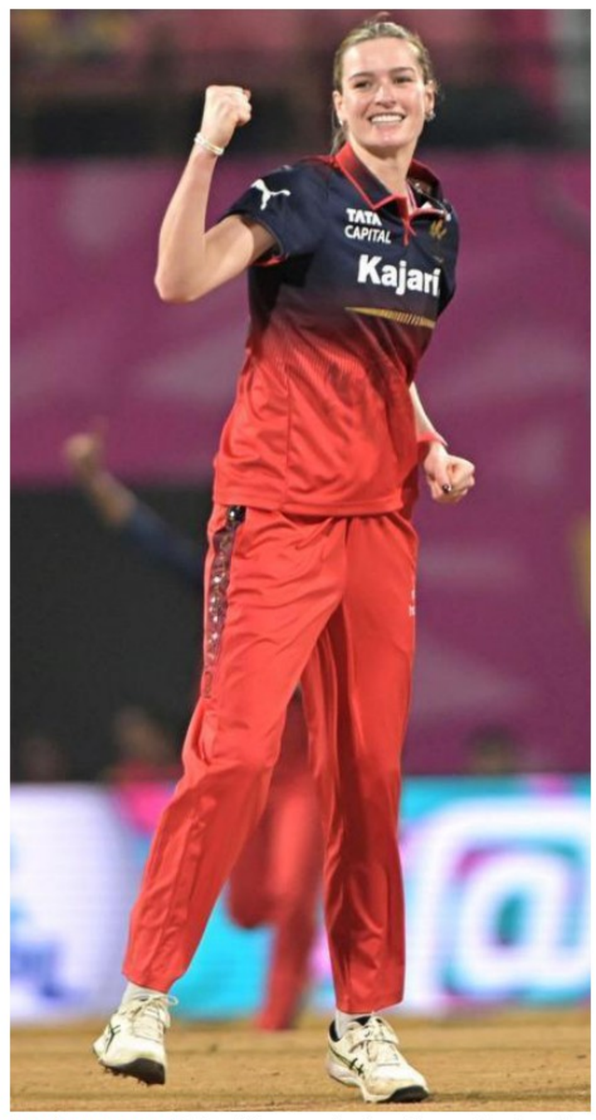
In a format where dot balls are like gold dust for the bowling unit, the 25-year-old hasn't allowed a run to be scored off 59 of the 96 deliveries she has bowled.

The tone was set in this WPL's very first encounter, between RCB and Mumbai Indians on January 9, when Bell kicked off proceedings with a maiden over to Amelia Kerr.

Impeccable

In RCB's most recent victory against Delhi Capitals on Saturday, the young seamer was impeccable. While Smriti Mandhana's knock of 96 grabbed the headlines, Bell's three scalps laid the foundation for a relatively straightforward chase. She struck twice in the very first over by castling Lizelle Lee and Laura Wolvaardt.

Bell employed the outswinger to bowl Lee around her legs, and then delivered an inducker that breached the gap between Wolvaardt's bat and pad.



Persistence pays: Bell's ability to maintain an immaculate length and swing the ball has yielded rich returns. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Points table

	M	W	L	Pts	NRR
Royal Challengers	4	4	0	8	1.600
Mumbai Indians	5	2	3	4	0.151
Gujarat Giants	4	2	2	4	-0.319
UP Warriorz	5	2	3	4	-0.483
Delhi Capitals	4	1	3	2	-0.856

Today's match

GUJARAT GIANTS vs RCB

Vadodara, 7.30 p.m

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 7

GG 3 | RCB 4

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

When Shafali Verma threatened to take the game away, the spearhead came back in the 17th over and deceived the daredevil opener with a back-of-the-hand slower ball.

"I am in this team to take wickets and creating pressure is the best way to do that," Bell told the broadcaster during the mid-innings break.

As the action moves to the Kotambi Stadium in Vadodara on Monday, RCB will expect more of the same from its new-ball weapon.

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Superintending Engineer,
Zone-2, 4th Floor, Annex Building-3, Bengaluru - 560002.

No: SE/BCCC/Z-2/TEND/03/2025-26 Date: 17-01-2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER - (CALL-2)
(Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal only)

The Superintending Engineer, Zone-2, BCCC, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible Contractors / Firm registered in BCCC or equivalent registration with Labour Department or any State Government Organizations for the Works detailed below.

Sl. No.	Description
1	Collection of Parking Fees Dispensary Road (OPH Road) to Kamaraj Road & Ibrahim Sahib Street Road. **Minimum Reserve Annual License fee (Rs. in Lakhs): 119.02, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 2,00,000/-**
2	Collection of Parking Fees for Millers Road Junction, Planeterium Road, St. John's Church Road & St. John's Road. **Minimum Reserve Annual License fee (Rs. in Lakhs): 141.52, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 2,12,500/-**
3	Collection of Parking Fees for 2nd Temple Road in Dattatreya Temple Ward, Sampige Road, Railway Parallel Road & BVK Iyengar Road. **Minimum Reserve Annual License fee (Rs. in Lakhs): 120.12, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 2,00,000/-**
4	Collection of Parking Fees for Mavalli Tank Bund Road, DVG Road in Sunkenahalli Ward, Shankarmatt Road & PMK Road. **Minimum Reserve Annual License fee (Rs. in Lakhs): 136.73, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 2,05,100/-**
5	Collection of Parking Fees for Vani Vilas Road, Vasavi Temple Street, Kanakapura Road, Diagonal Road, Patalamma Road and T. Mariyappa Road. **Minimum Reserve Annual License fee (Rs. in Lakhs): 152.93, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 2,29,500/-**

Calendar of Events: **1)** Tender documents can be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 19-01-2026. 2)** Queries may be Uploaded in Karnataka Public Procurement Portal on **21-01-2026 upto 16.00 Hours. 3)** Tenders must be Submitted Online through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **on or before 16.00 Hours on 27-01-2026. 4)** Technical Bids will be Opened on the Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in at the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Zone-2, BCCC, Bengaluru on 28-01-2026 at 16.30 Hours.** Further details can be had from the above office.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Zone-2, BCCC.

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GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, ANGUL
NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR ROAD WORKS IN ODISHA
Bid Identification No. Road Online AGL- 33/2025-26

No. 193 // **Dt. 12/01/26 //**

1. Name of the work : Road works.
2. Total No. of work : 13 Nos.
3. Estimated cost : Rs. 299.04 to Rs.667.13 Lakhs (Approx.)
4. Class of Contractor : As per annexure.
5. Period of completion : As per annexure.
6. Other details.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Angul	Road Online-AGL-33/2025-26	21.01.26 at 10.00 A.M	09.02.26 upto 5.00 P.M	07.02.26 upto 1.00 P.M	10.02.26 at 10.00 A.M	Road Online-AGL-33/2025-26

For detailed Notice inviting Tenders, Please visit to the website **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**

O-2049 **Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Angul.**

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDERS (Through KPP Portal Only)

BWSSB invites tenders in Two Stage Tender System from eligible Contractors for the following Works.

Sl. No.	Name of the Works	Amount Put to Tender / EMD Amount
	Office of the Chief Engineer (Central), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.	
	IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(Central)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-1/46/2025-26	Date: 17-01-2026
1	Providing and Laying of 600 mm Dia RCC NP-3 Class Sewer Line from Bairasandra Lake Pine Wood Villa Apartment G.M. Palya to Kaggadasapura Lake Bund coming under AEE(WWM) CV-1-2 Sub Division.	Rs. 213.10 Lakhs / Rs. 3.197 Lakhs
	IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(Central)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-1/48/2025-26	Date: 17-01-2026
2	Providing and Laying of 600 mm Dia RCC NP-3 Class Sewer Pipe Line from HAL Housing Complex to Existing Machinehole at Vibbutipura Lake.	Rs. 119.82 Lakhs / Rs. 1.798 Lakhs

For above works, Last Date for Receipt of Tenders: **02-02-2026 upto 16.00 Hours.** Bids will be Opened on: **03-02-2026 at 17.00 Hours.**

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Central)

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-Procurement Process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/Adverto/5088/2025-26

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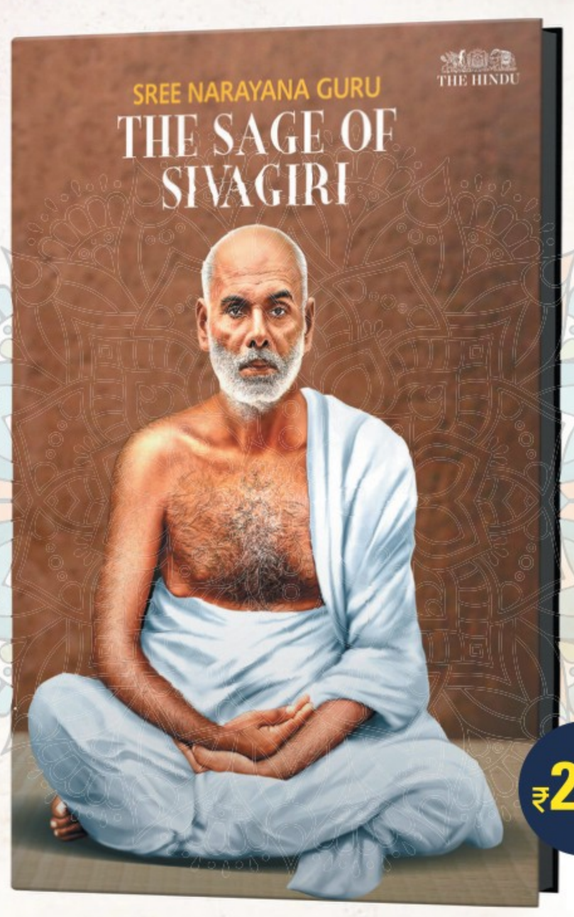

SREE NARAYANA GURU - THE SAGE OF SIVAGIRI

The credit for Kerala's transformation from a primitive, caste-ridden society to a State that boasts of human development indices that are higher than most parts of the country must go in some measure to a reform movement that swept through the region in the 19th and the early 20th centuries. One of the most prominent faces that brought about the change was Sree Narayana Guru, a monk, an exponent of Advaita, who channelled his spiritualism into social action. Sree Narayana Guru: The Sage of Sivagiri, a special volume brought out by The Hindu, pays tribute to the enduring legacy of this great man.

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